



# **FAMOUS TRAVELS**

**BY LAND, SEA AND AIR**

BY

**EVELYN POWELL-PRICE**



**RAM NARAIN LAL**

**PUBLISHER AND BOOKSELLER**

**ALLAHABAD**

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**1939**

Printed by  
RAMZAN ALI SHAH at the National Press,  
Allahabad.  
4 M. 35.

## PREFACE.

**T**O-DAY many of us think of history and geography as something rather dull which is written in books or drawn upon maps. But in olden times geography had to be studied by means of travel and exploration which made the explorers themselves famous, and brought wealth and renown to the countries to which they belonged.

At one time so little was known of the world that the people of each country believed that no other country existed but their own. Some of the most interesting things that have come down to us from the past are the maps made in early times for these show us very clearly how little of the world was known to the ancients, and what a mistaken idea they had of the size and shape of the countries of the world. The earliest voyages of exploration were nearly all undertaken in the cause of trade and the first notable voyage of this kind was made by Hanno, a sailor from Carthage on the north of Africa, about 520 B. C. The Phoenicians, who were a wonderful race of seamen from the northern part of Palestine, were also among the earliest explorers and were the pioneers of colonization.

By slow degrees, as the men of all nations became bolder and more adventurous and their vessels developed from hollowed out logs of wood to sailing ships driven by sails and oars, more and more voyages were in quest of the unknown.

The more we read of the lives and adventures of these brave men who risked their lives in the service of exploration, the more we should like and understand history and geography.

When we look at a map of the world we shall see, not a dull outline of drawing filled in with meaningless names, but a great story of thrilling adventure in which the names of seas and coastlines, towns and rivers recall to us the exciting experiences of some brave adventurer.

E. P.-P.

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## THE DISCOVERY OF THE EAST.

**L**ONG ago in the thirteenth century in the city of Venice, there lived two brothers who were jewel merchants. Their names were Nicolo and Maffeo Polo. Venice was then a great city so famous for its trade that people called it the Queen of the Adriatic.

Nicolo and Maffeo Polo were keen and intelligent men who had for many years travelled in search of merchandise and fine jewels. The idea came to them of going on a journey to Constantinople, where they had heard it was possible to buy many curious and beautiful things. They said good-bye to their families and sailed away on their quest. They were gone for so many years that their relations at last came to the conclusion that they must have perished in some storm at sea.

Nicolo had left a baby son in Venice who, as he grew to boyhood, was always eager to listen to any tales of adventure or travel. He used to question the sailors who had just

returned home after months of travel and these men would tell him long stories of the ports that they had visited, the strange races they had seen and the silk, jewels and spices which they had carried back to Venice on their ships.

Marco, like other Europeans of his day, only knew the East from the stories and legends which the Crusaders had left behind them. The maps of the world which men then studied made Jerusalem the middle of the earth. Marco knew nothing of Eastern Asia and China, and had only heard strange unbelievable tales about India from his sailor friends. He did not know that the world was round for in his time men believed it to be flat. But he knew that far beyond Venice and the blue waters of the Grand Canal there were rich cities and lands where figs and spices grew. He longed with all his heart to see these distant countries and to discover where his father and uncle had gone. He spent many hours on the busy quays watching the proud Venetian galleys sailing in and out of the harbour, some carrying Eastern treasure to Spain, Flanders and England; others bound

for Constantinople and the Black Sea ports, or Alexandria and Syria; whence they brought the jewels, the silks and spices which made Venice the most famous market in Europe. The sailors had told Marco many things about the Eastern lands which he longed to visit. They had described the burning plains and arid deserts across which the caravans had to come, carrying their merchandise on camels and mules, but the sailors could not tell him anything about the interior of these countries for they never had an opportunity to leave the ports and travel inland. "The caravan routes are long and dangerous," they told him. "One of the ways is barred by the Turks, the others, men say, pass through the lands of a terrible race called the Tartars, who are cruel and barbarous and kill all the travellers they meet."

The very word "Tartar" filled Marco with excitement. He had been told by his teachers of this great race of the Mongols who had come from Central Asia, like the Turks, and after conquering country after country had built up an empire which stretched from the Yellow River to the banks of the Danube, and

from the Persian Gulf to Siberia. Marco did not know much about their country, but he knew that two monks had visited it with letters from the Pope and the King of France who wanted to be friendly with the Tartars, and that these two monks had returned safely to Europe and had written books about their adventures in the land of the Mongols.

One day in 1269, when Marco was nearly fifteen years old, there was a loud knock on the door of the house where he lived with his uncle, and two dusty, bearded strangers entered the room. Marco and his relatives gazed at these men in astonishment and then his uncle ran to them and embraced them. "It is Nicolo and Maffeo whom we thought dead!" he cried and amid great rejoicing the strangers were embraced and made welcome.

Marco's joy knew no bounds and his father, Nicolo, could scarcely believe that this handsome well-grown boy was really his son whom he had left as a tiny baby. Marco plagued his father and uncle with questions about their adventures and they were allowed to have no rest until they had told him the full

story of their experiences. This is the story that he was told :—

Nicolo and Maffeo had reached Constantinople safely and had there laid in a store of jewels, meaning to exchange them for merchandise on their return journey, when they stopped at the Mediterranean ports on the way. But in the end they had decided to sail across the Black Sea to the Crimea where they had a counting-house. They stayed there for a while, polishing their jewels and setting their business in order, and then they made up their minds to go on a trading expedition to the land of the Tartars. They set off eastward until they reached the great Volga river and were in the country of the Tartars. The Tartar empire was so great that it was quite impossible for one man to govern the whole of it, so it had been divided into four separate kingdoms called Khanates, each of which was governed by a prince called a Khan.

Nicolo and Maffeo followed the banks of the Volga on their horses for many days and at last came to the court of one of the Khans who ruled over the Tartar tribe called the

Golden Horde. The Khan received them courteously and bought their jewels at double their value and treated them so kindly that they stayed for a whole year at his Court.

Then when they began to think it was time for them to return to Venice they found that it was impossible for them to go back the way they had come because the Khan was at war with some of his neighbours.

Nicolo and Maffeo therefore made up their minds to go forward instead of back and after many stirring adventures they reached the lovely city of Bokhara which was one of the richest markets in Asia. They lived there for three years, trading with the Bokhara merchants and buying a store of the rich silks and brocades for which Bokhara was famous. One day a Persian ambassador came to Bokhara on his way to visit the Lord of all the Tartars, who lived at Peking and was called the Great Khan. The ambassador was very much astonished to find Europeans in Bokhara and after talking with Nicolo and Maffeo he persuaded them to accompany him to the Court of the Great Khan: "We have heard that the great Lord eagerly desires to see and

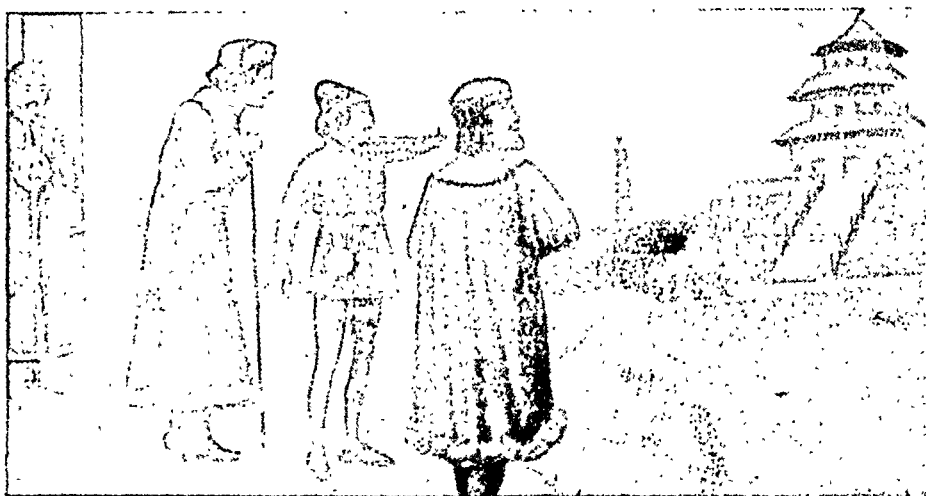
“speak with the men of Europe. He will treat you with courtesy and we shall see that you are not molested.”

It took them a whole year to reach the Court of the Great Khan, who ruled not only over the Tartars but over the vast country of China as well.

The travellers were graciously received by the Great Khan whose name was Kublai. He entertained them with feasts and gave them rich gifts, and everyday he would summon them and ask them questions about the Kings of Europe and the habits and religion of their own people. He was much interested in what they told him about the Pope. One day he summoned them and said: “My friends, I desire you to return to your own lands as my ambassadors. Make your journey to Rome, and carry this letter to your Pope. In it I ask him to send me a hundred men of learning to instruct me and my people about the Christian religion. And I charge you, my ambassadors, to return to me by way of Jerusalem, bringing with you some of the holy oil from the lamp which burns over the sepulchre of Jesus Christ.”



The two brothers knelt before the Great Khan and promised to carry out his wishes. They received the letter to the Pope and a golden tablet on which the Great Khan had written an order to all his subjects that they should help the brothers on their journey and give them anything they needed.



Little Marco Polo, his father and uncle.

Nicolo and Maffeo set out across Central Asia, and although the Khan's golden tablet brought them escorts and food, the journey was difficult and arduous. They had to encounter flooded rivers and snow and ice and it was three years before they finally arrived at Venice. When the story was told

Nicolo turned to his son, who had been listening with the utmost eagerness:

“Son,” he said, “we have still to carry our message to the Pope, and when we go back to the Court of Kublai Khan, we shall hope to take with us a hundred men of learning and a boy called Marco Polo!” Marco was overjoyed at this. At last he was to see all the strange lands which he had always longed to visit, and to travel across vast continents in search of adventures and new experiences. But it was over two years before they were able to set out, for the old Pope was dead and the new Pope refused to give them a hundred men of learning to take back to the Great Khan. He gave them instead a letter and presents and ordered two friars to accompany them to Peking. The friars started out very boldly, but as soon as they discovered that the journey was so difficult they grew afraid and returned to Rome, so the three Polos, as soon as they had got the phial of sacred oil at Jerusalem, set off alone. They travelled through Armenia and Mesopotamia, where they stayed for some weeks in Baghdad. Then they passed slowly through Persia, stopping at many of the great cities before starting across the desert of

Kerman which was infested with robbers. When they reached the shores of the Persian Gulf they decided to sail along it as far as the port of Ormuz which was at that period one of the most important cities for trade with India. Here they hoped to find boats to take them by sea to India, but were disappointed to find that the ships used by the merchants of Ormuz were very weak and badly constructed. They decided, therefore, to travel to the city of Balkh overland. From Balkh they made their way to a town called Badakshan which was full of wonderful jewels from its gold and silver mines. They stayed in Badakshan for a year and then travelled across the high plateau of Pamir where Marco was very interested in all the wild animals, especially the sheep which had enormous horns. To-day this animal is known as the "Ovis Poli," which means "Polo's sheep," because Marco Polo was the first person to describe it.

Week after week, month after month the three travellers marched steadily on. Sometimes they walked, sometimes they rode camels or horses, or even mules and donkeys. They

came to Kashgar and Yarkand, and crossing the sandy deserts of Turkestan and Mongolia, at length came near to the Great Khan's summer palace. Here they were met by envoys who had been sent out to meet them, who received them with great honour and rejoicing and told them that the Great Khan was looking forward to their return. Very soon they came in sight of the beautiful city of Shandu, where Kublai Khan had built himself a wonderful summer palace of marble and precious stones, beautifully carved and gilded. This palace was surrounded by miles of parkland, where deer and white horses were grazing. The Polos were brought into the presence of the Great Khan as he sat in state on his throne, surrounded by his nobles and astrologers. Nicolo presented their precious oil and the Pope's letter and gifts with which Kublai Khan was very pleased. He questioned them about their adventures and was greatly interested in their accounts of the many lands through which they had passed. Then his eyes fell on Marco who was standing at a little distance away while his uncles talked with the Khan.

“Who is that young man?” asked Kublai Khan as he looked at Marco.

“He is my son and your servant,” replied Nicolo.

“He pleases me much and is very welcome,” replied the Khan, and turning to one of his nobles he ordered him to enroll Marco among his attendants of honour. After this a great feast was held in the palace which Marco has described to us in his book in great detail. The Great Khan himself ate at the upper end of the audience hall with his face turned southwards. On his left side sat his wife, and on his right his sons and grandsons at a table a little lower than his own. The guests sat all round the hall, some at tables and others on rich carpets. They were served with wine in golden cups and meat and camel’s milk by the servants who ran busily hither and thither.

The slaves who waited on Kublai Khan had their mouths and noses covered with embroidered veils that they might not breathe upon his food. When he called for a drink a page brought it and then retired three paces and knelt down and everybody in the hall

prostrated himself on the ground, while the musicians began to play soft music until the Khan had finished drinking, and the guests had sat down to their meat again. When the meal was over the servants carried away the tables and a troupe of actors performed a play, or jugglers and acrobats amused the guests.

Marco was very happy at the Khan's palace. Everyone grew to love and respect him and Kublai Khan soon made him his favourite attendant. He hunted and fished with the Khan, dressed in Tartar costume and learned to read and write their language. By this time he had grown a tall handsome young man. The Khan found him so intelligent and willing that he sent him on an important mission to a city six months journey away. He was so pleased with the way in which Marco carried out the mission, and with all the interesting information he brought him, that he soon made a habit of sending the young Venetian on long embassies to collect details about the manners and customs of the people.

The Polos remained in the service of the

Khan for seventeen years. During this time Marco travelled all over northern and western China to the outskirts of Tibet. He went by sea on a mission to Cochin China and India. He even governed the Chinese province of Yangshu for three years. He visited Kinsai, a city which he described as "stretching like Paradise through the breadth of heaven."

He saw the lovely city of Suchan with its six thousand bridges of stone; its men of science and its priceless merchandise. But at last, in spite of all these glorious sights, the three Polos began to long for their own city of Venice and their home. They begged Kublai Khan to allow them to depart but at first he refused to listen. He loved and trusted the three Europeans too greatly to be willing to let them leave him for ever, but, luckily for the Polos, an Ambassador from Persia arrived at Kublai's Court seeking a bride for their ruler. Kublai Khan chose them a beautiful girl from his own household and they set out, but eight months later they returned because of the wars which were being fought in many lands through which they had to pass. The Persian Ambassador besought the Khan to

allow the Polos to go with them and to be their guides.

“The Venetians are skilled seamen and if we travel by sea we shall avoid the dangers by land,” they told Kublai Khan, who at last gave his consent and sadly bade farewell to the three men who had served him so faithfully and so well.

So the Tartar princess sailed away down the coast of China with an escort of six hundred and the three Venetians and after a journey of nearly three years reached the Persian Court in safety. Of the six hundred who had set out eighteen persons, the princess and the three Polos remained alive, the rest had perished during the long and dangerous journey. On the way Marco had visited the island of Java, Sumatra and Ceylon. He had travelled along the Malabar coast of India and had seen the fishermen finding great pearls in their oysters. In Sumatra he had tasted coconut milk and sago and discovered camphor. In Ceylon he had seen rubies and sapphires of stupendous size.

The little Tartar princess wept when they left her at the Persian Court. They set out



across Persia along the caravan route, which they knew so well, to the shores of the Black Sea. Thence they took ship to Constantinople and sailed away to Venice.

### Questions.

1. Why was the city of Venice called the Queen of the Adriatic in Marco Polo's time?
  2. What was the European idea of geography in the thirteenth century?
  3. Who were the Mongols?
  4. Describe in your own words the feast which took place in Kublai Khan's summer palace at Shandu.
-

## WITH GORDON IN THE SUDAN

**I**N the year 1876, when the Khedive Ismail asked Charles Gordon to become governor of the tribes of the Upper Nile, the slave trade in the Sudan had grown to terrible proportions. The Government of Egypt, which controlled

the Sudan, had no real control over it, or if they had power, they did not trouble to exert it against this pest. The result was that out of every ten people in the country no less than six were slaves. Soon the slavers (or men



General Gordon.

who were agents for selling these poor slaves) became so rich and powerful that they refused to obey their Khedive. One of the richest and most wicked of these men, named Sebehu, was made king, and, as an example of his power, he used to take about

an escort of chained lions. Sebehu used to train even the slaves whom he caught to become slavehunters in their turn, and the wicked traffic grew to such an extent that at last the Egyptian Government sent for Gordon to come and suppress it.

Charles Gordon had already made a great name for himself in the British army. He had fought in the Crimea with distinction, and nine years later he had gone to China and rendered such splendid services in helping to suppress the Tai-Ping rebellion that the Emperor of China had offered him a huge reward. Gordon had refused to touch a penny of this reward because he said that the Emperor had failed to keep his word with him. The Emperor had killed some rebel chiefs called Wangs whose lives he had promised Gordon to spare, and so Gordon would not be under any obligation to him. But if the Emperor soon learnt to fear Gordon, the other Chinese learnt to love and respect him very quickly. Although the Chinese had a poor reputation as soldiers, Colonel Gordon began to drill and discipline them and to show them something of the fearlessness of danger which

he felt himself. He used to lead these half-trained troops into battle armed only with a bamboo cane. If they began to fall back, or to show signs of cowardice, he had only to wave his cane, and so great was his hold over them that they would rally to him at once. At last they became known as the "Ever Victorious Army."

Gordon was one of those rare beings who are born into the world now and again with all the characteristics of true kingship. He was a real leader and master of men and was able, by his own wit and genius, to inspire men to great deeds and self-sacrifice. But although he had done so much in China it was in the Sudan that Gordon did his greatest work and finally sacrificed his life.

When Gordon arrived at Cairo the Khedive told him that he must lead an expedition up the Nile to Khartoum, and that he must use the Egyptian troops in Khartoum to put down the slave trade. Gordon believed the Khedive at first but he very soon discovered that he was being deceived. The expedition was not meant to succeed, but only to humbug the people of other countries into thinking that

the Khedive was doing a great deal to suppress it. Yet, although Gordon had found out that he was being deceived, he still did not hesitate to carry out his mission. He knew that there were tens of thousands of people in captivity and wretchedness in the Sudan and that it was his duty to help them if he could. Therefore he set off up the Nile with only 200 Egyptian troops, who were badly armed and badly drilled. They travelled in a boat called a *dahabeah* to Berber. This boat was constantly being caught by the tangled water-weeds in the river, and Gordon had to leap out and help the boatmen to push it on again. The Egyptians were too frightened to help because of the great Nile crocodiles which infested the waters. At last the little force reached Berber and marched across the desert to Khartoum. From there Gordon sailed up the Nile to a place called Gondoroko where he saw wonderful beasts and birds. There were great hippopotami walking about on the banks of the river; there were herds of wild elephants and buffaloes, and troops of monkeys, while giraffes were nibbling the tops of trees. When Gordon reached Gondoroko his difficulties

began. He found that the Khedive had no powers at all over the surrounding country. No one could dare to venture within a mile of the city without going in danger of his life from the savage tribes, whose wives and sons the slavers were constantly raiding. Gordon had no soldiers on whom he could rely; his officials whom he trusted took bribes from the slavers to make his soldiers mutiny, and the soldiers were cowardly and lazy. Gordon, therefore, turned his attention to the Sudanese themselves, the people whom he had come to save. He fed the hungry and set others to plant grain, paying them for all they did, very often out of his own pocket. He would wander among the savage tribes unarmed, nursing and doctoring the sick, playing with the children and listening to their complaints with a gentleness and courtesy that soon spread his fame far and wide. Where an Egyptian official would not have dared to go without a large escort and much military display, Gordon could walk in absolute safety without even a stick in his hand. As soon as he had won this wonderful hold over the people he began to form a new army of his

own, making soldiers of the hardy Sudanese and training them so that they became first-class fighting men. When he rescued any slaves he enlisted them in his army and trained them into fine warriors. He even enlisted some of the slavers whom he captured. One day he came across a tribe of cannibals whom he soon won over and enlisted in the army. He refused to take more than a third of the pay the Khedive offered him because the money came from the poor, and the pay that he did accept he spent in trying to help them. At length—tired of the Khedive's weakness and the corruption of the officials—he resigned his command, only to be called back to Egypt the next year. This time he was given almost absolute powers, being made Governor-General of the Sudan. He ruled over more than a thousand miles of country. "This means," he wrote to his sister in England, "that there will be an end of slavery, if God wills, for the whole secret of the matter is in the Government of the Sudan."

Now that he was no longer hampered by the feeble assistance of the Khedive, Gordon took up the task of stopping the slave-trade

with great energy. He raided caravan after caravan, very often finding them full of starving slaves, nearly dying of hunger and thirst, and quite incapable of looking after themselves when they were set free. He had so few underlings whom he could trust that he would often ride thirty or forty miles in a day on his camel which was called the "Telegraph" because of its swiftness. In the three years during which he acted as Governor of the Sudan he rode, it has been said, over 8,000 miles. When he was on the march he would leave his escort far behind and dressed in his rich uniform of a Turkish marshal would pass through a village before the guard could turn out to salute him. Once when news was brought him that the son of Sebehu, the slaver king, was about to attack a weak little garrison of Gordon's with 6,000 men, Gordon mounted the "Telegraph" and rode off alone and unarmed across the desert. He covered 84 miles in a day and a half and arrived amidst the garrison covered with a swarm of desert flies which he had ridden into on the way. He put courage and new life into the trembling little garrison, and then



seeing that the great hordes of the enemy soldiers were encamped at a short distance, he rode boldly out among them and demanded to see their leader. Once in the midst of the enemy he stopped and harangued them. He warned them of the power he held in the Sudan and finally by a remarkable effort of personal courage and force of personality which is surely unparalleled in history, he made them lay down their arms and give up the attack on the garrison.

But with all his personal influence Gordon had to fight the slave-traders. By marching rapidly from one place to another, freeing and drilling slaves as soldiers, opening up communications from one post of soldiers to another, cutting off the water-supply of some tribes so that it could be brought to heel, and riding incredible distances through duststorms and sun and night Gordon triumphed and the slave-trade in the Sudan was at an end. When his great object was accomplished Gordon was exhausted and ill. His doctors ordered him to return to England and rest if he wanted to live. But rest was a thing which Gordon could never do. Soon after his return to

England he received an urgent call from China which was then again seething with rebellion and threatened with attack by Russia. The War Office refused to give Gordon leave to go, upon which he resigned his commission in the British Army and set out for China without any money to pay his passage. In Bombay he managed to borrow his passage-money to China and succeeded in a few days in making the war with Russia impossible. The Chinese listened eagerly to his counsel, knowing that the advice he gave was of a man who was absolutely uncorruptible. After Gordon's departure from the Sudan a Muhammedan fanatic, calling himself the Mahdi, raised a revolt and soon conquered a large part of the country. He swept the people of the desert into a wave of aggressive feeling and it became clear that the Sudan would have to be abandoned or fought for with British troops. When Gordon had left Sudan he had said: "You must get a Man to succeed me. He will want three qualifications—an iron constitution, a contempt for money and a contempt for death." No such man had been found and the Mahdi had swept all before him. Then it was that the

British Government remembered the man who had warned them of all that might happen in the Sudan if it were not strongly held. They sent Gordon out to the Sudan once more. Lord Granville, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, took Gordon's ticket at the railway station in London, his old comrade of Crimean days, Lord Wolesley carried his bag and the Commander-in-Chief (the Duke of Cambridge) held open the carriage door. It was thus that General Gordon set off from England on his last great venture.

You will read in your histories of his great stand at Khartoum, of how he fought the Mahdi there with few troops and fewer munitions. Of how he begged the British Government to send him help and support, and of how that help, under his old friend Lord Wolesley, came just a day too late. When the British advance guard entered Khartoum they found that the city had fallen to the Mahdi and that Gordon was dead.

He had died, hacked to pieces, while making a gallant and vain attempt to rally his starving troops to a last grand resistance.

We can be almost certain that Gordon had

foreseen failure and death in this last great enterprise of his. He had gone to Khartoum almost without troops, provisions and ammunition. He must have known that he was bound to fail, but he also knew that his death would make a great stir of feeling in England and ensure swift vengeance against the Mahdi. He knew that if he gave his life at this juncture Britain would wake up to the need of strong action in the Sudan and that the memory of his heroic life would live on in the peace and prosperity of his beloved Sudanese.

### Questions.

1. What was the Khedive?
2. Tell the story of Gordon's experience when he rode 84 miles across the desert to the help of the small garrison which was being attacked by Sebehu's son.
3. Explain why Gordon's death helped the Sudanese.
4. Analyse the following sentence:—  
"The Government of Egypt, which controlled the Sudan, had no real power over it, or if they had power, they did not trouble to exert it against this pest."
5. What is meant by the word "slaver"?

## DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

### The Explorer of Central Africa.

FROM the time when David Livingstone was a boy he was very fond of reading and listening to tales of travel, and most of all to stories about China, Persia and India. When he was nineteen he read a book about a man called Dr. Gutzlaff who had gone to China as a doctor. It seemed a wonderful thing to



David Livingstone.

David to leave friends and home and go to a far-off land, facing death and many dangers, in order to heal people who knew nothing of the marvelous things which the doctors of Europe could do. David determined to become a doctor and to go out to China. His father was not a rich man and had a

large family and so it was impossible for him

to pay David's fees at College, but by working in a spinning-mill David was able to save enough money, year by year, to allow him to attend Glasgow University in the winters.

It was five years before he had finished his medical course and could start for China, and then, just as he had finished his course of study, a terrible war broke out in China and he was not allowed to go to China by the authorities.

Soon after this disappointing event David Livingstone went to a missionary meeting where the speaker was a Mr. Moffat who had just returned to Scotland from Africa, a country in those days almost unexplored and unknown. The coasts of Africa had been known and charted since the earliest days of history and the Portuguese had explored its western shores. Dutch and English had colonised the land on its south, but the whole of the central part of Africa was a blank space on the map of the world. Men thought it to be a wide desert where no European could go. Mr. Moffat spoke very interestingly of his life in Africa. He described the natives and their witch-doctors and superstitions. He made Africa live in the

minds of his audience and David Livingstone was at once fired with the ambition to go. After the lecture was over he spoke to Mr. Moffat who told him a lot more about Africa: "There is a vast plain to the north of our missionary station where I have sometimes seen the smoke of a thousand fires rising on the evening air, and yet no European has ever been there." David was greatly interested and excited. Here was an opportunity to go where no white man had been before, an unknown land to be explored and strange animals and plants to be seen, a people who had neither doctors, nor books nor teachers!

"I will try and go to Africa as soon as possible," he told Mr. Moffat.

Early in the November of the year 1840, David Livingstone said good-bye to his parents and his brothers and sisters and sailed away in a little ship called the "George". For three long months the ship travelled south and at last rounded the Cape of Good Hope and sailed into Algoa Bay. There Livingstone left the ship and got into an ox-cart to travel for seven hundred miles across the African *velt*, or tableland, to Kurruman, the place

where the Missionary Society which he had joined had their station. On this journey across Africa Livingstone had many opportunities of seeing the country and its peoples. He was delighted with the brilliantly-coloured birds which flashed through the trees in front of the rumbling ox-wagon. He saw herds of antelopes crossing the path with great leaps and bounds and tall ostriches racing across the velt. When he got to Kurruman he asked to be sent into the country where no missionary or doctor had ever been before. He stayed at the mission station to collect food and to rest his ox-team, and then he set out alone, except for his African boys, to find the "People of the Crocodile" who were a tribe of Central Africa. He was kindly received by these Africans who made him stay with them for six months and built him a hut to live in. The "People of the Crocodile" were great hunters and warriors and spent their time in hunting lions or buffaloes or in fighting some other tribe. Livingstone bound up their wounds, taught them how to make canals to irrigate their dry fields and told them many things. He opposed the



witch-doctors, who were very important men in the tribe, and refused to allow them to poison people. When he heard that some men of a neighbouring tribe had just killed a European traveller he went fearlessly to visit them and they did him no harm. Soon people for hundreds of miles began to come to see the strange foreign doctor who had healing in a box, and who was never too busy or too tired to bind up their sores or to give them advice and medicine. After the six months was over he went to live with another tribe called the "People of the Monkey" who were rather a cowardly tribe and were so afraid to hunt the wild beasts which surrounded them that the lions had grown so bold that they would walk into their villages and carry people away in broad daylight.

Livingstone knew that if one lion was killed the others would be afraid to come near the villages any more, so he made the "People of the Monkey" form a great circle round a hill, like an elephant keddah in India, while he and his servant, Mebalwe, took guns and attacked the lions which were on the top of the hill. Mebalwe fired at a lion and missed

it which made all the lions very angry and two of them rushed through the circle of men and escaped. Then Livingstone fired and hit a lion in the shoulder. After this he had to reload his gun and as he was doing it the wounded lion leapt upon him and catching him by the shoulder pulled him down on the ground. The faithful Mebalwe fired again and the lion dropped Livingstone as a cat drops a mouse. It rushed at Mebalwe and tore his thigh, then it rolled over and died. The other lions fled. Livingstone's left arm was crushed to splinters and he was never able to lift it properly again. He had eleven great tooth marks which showed on his arm all his life. A few months later Livingstone went back to Kurruman to see Mr. Moffat who had arrived there with his daughter Mary. Livingstone soon fell in love with Miss Moffat and married her. Fortunately she was as fearless and as fond of travelling and exploring as he was himself. He took her back to live amongst the "People of the Monkey" and set to work to build her a house. He made bricks of clay and baked them in the sun. Then he cut trees in the forest and made doors

and windows. The "People of the Monkey" brought them milk and corn and in return Livingstone doctored them and taught them to read and write. After a while Livingstone determined to explore the central part of Africa to find out if it were really a great desert as people thought. He himself did not believe that it was. He believed that it would be possible to make a way from the heart of it down to the coast. He wanted to open up a road down which doctors and teachers and traders could travel and bring education and civilisation to the peoples of Africa. He made friends with another tribe called the Makololo, whose chief soon came to love and admire Livingstone. This chief gladly gave him some of his best trackers to go with him on his great journey to find a way through the heart of Africa to the coast. Livingstone said good-bye to his wife and baby and set out. At first they had to make their way through a dusty, sandy desert where they found no water for several days. Then at last the desert came to an end and they came to a land of forests and mountains and to a great river where a tribe of Africans lived. These people spent

most of their time going up and down the river in canoes which they made out of single tree trunks. The explorer travelled on and on until at last he came to a great lake which the Africans called Lake Nigami.

After a time he returned to his own village to see how his family was but a few months later he set out again and this time reached the river Zambesi, with tall palms lining its banks and great wild elephants crashing and trumpeting in its forests. They saw fat hippopotami swimming in the river and wonderful green parrots and birds of every kind. They crossed great whirlpools and cataracts, and saw sparkling waterfalls and fountains in the rocky bed of the river. Here, too, they met a gang of slaves who had been caught and carried off from their villages by Arab slave-dealers. The men were in couples with their heads fastened to either end of a long pole and the women and children were heavily chained. Many of them were ill and could hardly walk but the slave-dealers lashed them cruelly with whips and drove them along like beasts. Livingstone's heart was filled with anger and pity at this dreadful sight, and

he determined more than ever to find a way through Africa so that the people of Europe could come and put an end to these dark practices. He was suffering from fever and his faithful companions began to lose heart but in spite of this they stayed with him through all his dangers.

Angry tribes, thinking he was a slave-trader, came out to kill him, but he showed his white skin to prove that he was no Arab and they became friendly. The little party of explorers met with every kind of adversity and adventure. They were caught by great floods on the rivers, the rain came down in solid sheets and spoilt their guns and food. Livingstone was so ill with fever that he could hardly stagger along, but by sheer will-power and endurance he pushed onwards, till at the end of six months they saw the blue line of the sea and the white houses of a Portuguese town. In the harbour beyond the town they saw European ships riding at anchor and Livingstone thanked God that their journey was at an end. He had found his path through Africa.

The Portuguese were very kind to Livingstone and nursed him back to health and strength. They gave his companions clothes and food and begged Livingstone to go back to



Livingstone's Last Journey.

England on one of their ships to regain his health properly but Livingstone refused. He had promised to take his Africans back to their homes and he would not desert them, so after

a short time he set off once more on his march of one thousand five hundred miles back to the heart of Africa.

We have no time here to follow Livingstone on all his travels. He has related the story of all his great discoveries of lakes and waterfalls and strange tribes in a book. He was lost for many years in the depths of Africa and the slave-traders, who dreaded and hated his influence with the Africans, stole his letters and supplies so that nobody could find him. An American newspaper then sent out a young man named Stanley to search for the lost explorer. After a long and arduous search through the dark forests, and on the treacherous rivers of Central Africa, he at last found him and begged him to go back to England. Livingstone, who was now bent and grey-haired and constantly suffering from the fever which he had caught in the malarious swamps of Africa, refused to go.

“I must finish my task here,” he told the young newspaper-man and so Stanley reluctantly left him alone in his adopted country to carry on the brave task which he

had set himself to do so many years before. Stanley had a great story to take home to England, of his own adventures and of the character and gallantry of Livingstone, the pioneer of Central Africa.

Two years later Livingstone died. He was quite alone with five faithful Africans who, as soon as he was dead, carried his body all the way to Zanzibar, a journey of ten months, during which they faced danger and death from many hostile tribes and traders. At Zanzibar his body was put on a ship and taken to England. Livingstone lies buried among England's great men in Westminster Abbey.

### Questions.

1. How did Livingstone pay for his University education ?
  2. Describe Livingstone's journey across Africa when he travelled from Algoa Bay to Kurruman.
  3. How did Mebalwe save his master's life ?
  4. Why did Livingstone want to open up a road from the heart of Africa to the coast ?
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## SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND.

### From Turkestan to India.

THE well-known explorer and climber, Sir Francis Younghusband, as a young subaltern of only twenty-four years old was travelling in Manchuria on military exploration work when he was given the chance to return to India by way of Chinese Turkestan on duty. Although Younghusband was so young he had already had a good deal of experience in exploration and had recently revised the "Military Gazetteer" of Kashmir. He had travelled extensively in the Himalayas and was marked down by the Intelligence Department as being a very promising explorer.

It was decided that he should find his way by the then unknown route to India across the parched Gobi desert. Since the time of Marco Polo, six centuries before, no European had travelled from China to Central Asia, so we can imagine with what excitement the keen young soldier looked forward to this project which was, however, to have many difficulties

for him. The first and greatest difficulty which he encountered was the scarcity of information to be got, even at Peking, about the route across the Gobi desert.

He finally set out from Peking with two Chinamen to guide him to find his way to India 3,500 miles away.

Younghusband arrived in Yarkand in the end of August and set to work making his preparations for the last and certainly most difficult part of his journey. When he left Peking he had intended to follow the caravan route across the Himalayas, by the Karakoram Pass and Leh, into India. This was the regular means of communication between India and Turkestan. It crosses high passes and the traders often suffer greatly from the intense cold and the bitter winds, but it is used every year and is well-known. At Yarkand, however, Younghusband was handed a letter from his Chief telling him that he was himself travelling by the Karakoram Pass, and suggesting that Younghusband should strike out a new line and explore the route to India by the Mustagh Pass into Baltistan and thence to Kashmir.

Younghusband knew of this pass from his

study of the Kashmir Gazetteer. It is marked on many ancient maps and was at one time a recognised route between Baltistan and India. No European had ever set foot upon it and no one at all had crossed it for over twenty-five years. It seemed impossible to get any information about it in Yarkand and it promised to be a very difficult undertaking with some very high peaks to cross. This pass lies across the main watershed between India and Central Asia, across the range which divides the Indian and Chinese empires.

Younghusband had no mountaineering experience and no mountaineering appliances, but he had unlimited energy and pluck and the "enthusiastic help" of all the Indian traders in Yarkand. As soon as they learnt of his mission they formed themselves into a committee and found him a guide, a man named Wali, who had actually crossed the Mustagh Pass twenty-five years before. "The traders were a cheery, genial lot, very solemn, dignified and differential when they came to pay me a formal call, but gay and light-hearted as boys when they took me out to an orchard and entertained me to dinner—a dinner in

the open commencing with a dessert of lemons, grapes and peaches plucked in the garden itself....." Most of these traders were Indians who had come to trade in Turkestan. Some of them were men of Bokhara and Kashgar who were accustomed to trade with India, but all knew what hardship was and all had sympathy for a traveller like themselves, who had to make his way over a difficult and dangerous route into India. The guide, Wali, at first seemed callous and indifferent. He told the young soldier that he knew the way and would show it to him, but only on condition that he was trusted implicitly. He had heard that Englishmen trusted their maps and not their guides. If, however, Younghusband would trust him he would undertake to lead him to Baltistan which was his native country.

Younghusband was amused at his plain speaking and assured him that he would trust him entirely as he had no map to look at and therefore could not entrust himself to it. The country through which he had to pass was in some part entirely unexplored and therefore unmapped. Wali was taken on and the rest

of the caravan rapidly gathered together. This consisted of eleven men, besides Young-husband, and thirteen ponies to carry the provisions and gear. A first-rate man named Mohamed Esa was put in charge of the caravan. He was a man of Ladak and originally a Buddhist, but from travelling frequently to Yarkand and mixing so much with Mohamedans he had become one himself. He was hardy and could endure any amount of cold and discomfort. As well as this he was cheerful and resourceful, and knew the Yarkandi men and ponies thoroughly and could get the most work out of both. Under Mohamed Esa was another Ladakhi, Shukar Ali, for whom Younghusband developed a great affection.....“Never under any circumstances whatever did I ever see him anything but cheerful.....the harder things went, the more cheerful did he become. He had not enough authority for the leadership of a caravan but for keeping the caravan in good spirits and for readiness to turn his hand to any nasty bit of work that had to be done—such, for example, as carrying me, of his own free offer on his back across a glacier stream

with huge blocks of ice swirling round him, he could not be surpassed.....”

Another excellent man whom the traders produced was a Balti named Turgan who had been captured by Hunza traders and sold into slavery in Yarkand. The traders urged Younghusband to buy his release from slavery and take him back to his own country of Baltistan. Younghusband paid eighty rupees for his freedom.

The men were provided with heavy sheep-skin coats, fur caps and new shoes. Blankets and packing saddles were bought for the ponies, and a huge tea urn and big brass cooking pots for the whole caravan. Young-husband brought an entire outfit of Yarkandi clothes and, but for his sun helmet, might have been mistaken for a Yarkandi. The provisions consisted of rice, tea, sugar and ghi with some small dough cakes cooked in ghi, and several sheep were driven along to be eaten one by one. All this cost more money than the young soldier possessed, but the kindly traders came to his aid again and gladly lent him all he needed, while he wrote out a kind of cheque on half a sheet of ordinary

notepaper and promised to repay them on his arrival in India. He was accompanied for a few miles on his way by the traders, who ordered the members of the caravan to behave well and see their young leader safely over the Mustagh Pass to India. Then bidding him farewell they turned back to Yarkand while the caravan made its way across the dusty plains of Chinese Turkestan.

In a few days they came to the mountains and leaving Kuguar, the last place where they could get supplies, they crossed the first pass of about 10,000 feet and then the Kuen-lun range, a sort of outer barrier of the Himalayas, by the Chiragh-saldi Pass which is over 16,000 feet in height. The first thrill of adventure began to steal over the young explorer for they had passed all human habitations, all paths and tracks, and ahead of them a mass of snowy peaks rose against the sky.

The caravan had to be on constant guard against the possible attacks of Kanjuti raiders who were wont to creep out of the hidden valley of Hunza and raid the caravans on the regular Karakoram Pass route to India.

Three of the men in the caravan had themselves been captured by these raiders, and they suggested that the whole party should sleep in the open behind rocks, for fear a tent might draw too much attention to the caravan. Younghusband slept with his revolver ready but owing perhaps to these precautions no raiders troubled them on their way.

A day later they reached the Yarkand River and found that they must build a path up some of its terrible gorges. They then followed a small tributary stream towards a range of hills which Younghusband, in true pioneer style, named the "Aghil range," and camped near its summit. The guide Wali then caused great consternation by saying that he could not remember the way ahead. They had spent a most tiring day scrambling about the great gorges off the river, hauling up the ponies, moving great boulders and building paths and the whole party were hardly in a good mood to receive Wali's news. They were encamped on open ground with no trees or bushes but a rough scrub-like grass, and ahead of them was the impenetrable looking summit range of the Aghil mountains.



Younghusband climbed higher up the mountain and tried to see if there was no gap or pass in the great range above them, but had to return to the camp defeated. The sun had set and the air was becoming colder and more icy, but there was no wind or damp and the caravan party settled cosily round their fire to eat their evening meal together. By then the little band of men had become great friends and comrades; the Ladakhis from Leh, the Baltis from Baltistan and the Chinaman and the Englishman had become an attached and cheerful party. All ate heartily from the steaming pot on the fire and tea was handed round in the great tea urn which had been bought in Yarkand, and after the meal everybody began to tell stories until it was time to put out the fire and find a sleeping place behind the rocks. Wali became more confident and decided that he knew just the direction they must take next day to cross the great barrier range, so everybody went to bed more cheerful.

Next morning it was freezing hard; a stream over the rocks near to their camp had become coated with ice, but after a good breakfast

the party started off, making straight for the barrier which was covered with snow and seemed to be about five miles distant. As they got nearer to the barrier, a wide valley appeared on their left, which Wali recognised gladly, and said that up it they would find the pass for which they were looking. The valley was wide and open and Younghusband hurried on ahead of his party, such was his eagerness to see what was beyond the pass, but the faster he walked the faster the pass seemed to recede before his advance. As he mounted one hill he would find more hills behind it. At last he came to a little lake, and beyond it was a rise which he was sure must be the pass at last. He worked himself up for a final effort (for it is not easy to run at 16,000 feet), and scrambled to the top and there he was rewarded by the most magnificent view that he had ever seen: "Beyond was the fulfilment of my dreams. There, arrayed across the valley was a glistering line of splendid peaks, all radiant with sunshine, their summits white with purest snow, their flanks stupendous cliffs. And bearing away the rich abundance of their snowy covering were vast

glaciers rolling to the valley bottom.....Where I had reached no white man had ever reached before. There were before me peaks of 26,000 feet and in one case 28,000 feet in height. For mountain majesty that scene is hardly to be excelled.....I seemed to grow greater myself from the mere fact of having seen it. How strange it is that so few men should ever see this grandeur. Those mountains have stood there for thousands, perhaps millions of years in all their radiant glory and yet so few have seen them.....”

But it was one thing to be filled with awe and admiration for the wonderful mountains and quite another thing to find a way over them, as the travellers soon discovered. They realised that they must first find their way down to the valley of the Oprang river which ran at the base of the great mountains and seemed to have its source in a vast glacier to the left of them. On the second day of their descent into the plain they saw an enormous snowy peak towering thousands of feet into the sky above them. They were now among great snow mountains and Wali assured Younghusband that ahead of them up the valley was the

Mustagh Pass, and though they could see no pass the guide was sure that he could find a way. After a few miles they found the whole valley blocked from side to side with huge mounds of broken stones and solid ice, and Younghusband realised that they were on the glacier which flows down from the Mustagh Pass, and which seemed to stretch for many miles before them. His first feelings were of despair for it occurred to him that the ponies would never be able to travel across that wilderness of ice, but to his great joy he found that Mohamed Esa and Shukar Ali had no such doubts and were already driving the sure-footed little animals on to the ice. The glacier as they came on to it showed an unexpected beauty. There were walls of transparent dark green ice and lovely caves with floor, walls and roof, all of ice and with delicate icicles hanging from the roof. The way grew more and more difficult, and the poor ponies slipped and cut themselves constantly, but the little party kept on their way until they at length reached the head of the glacier. Two men were sent on to look at the pass, but returned to say that it would be quite impossible

for the ponies and would be very difficult, even for the men. Younghusband conferred anxiously with his companions. Wali said that the only thing to do was to try to get over the older Mustagh Pass which was to the left of the one the men had explored. The ponies and their syces would have to be left where they were, and Younghusband and the remaining men would have to try and reach Ashkoli, the first village on the Indian side, the village from which Wali had himself come twenty-five years before. From there they would have to send back supplies to the men who could not get over the pass, to enable them to make their way with the ponies to Shahidula and by the Karakoram Pass to Leh. This seemed the only possible thing to do, and even that might not be possible for the old pass might have changed or become blocked up. They were now over 18,000 feet up and the cold was intense. They took with them one coolie load of food and their sleeping bags and set out. They reached the summit of the pass at noon for they were unable to walk quickly owing to the height. Then came their second disappointment. Instead of the easy

snow slope they had expected to find on the far side of the pass, there was a tremendous ravine covered with snow and ice. The young soldier was appalled but luckily he allowed no trace of his real feeling to show on his face before his companions. The men were also appalled at the terrible road before them but they did not like to show fear before a sahib. As well as this Wali was a man of great character. He had said he would get Younghusband over the range into Baltistan and he was determined to do so at all costs. Younghusband was now at the climax of his long journey. He was actually standing on the exact dividing line between China and India. If he could get down that precipice safely his last great obstacle would be overcome; the way down to Kashmir and India would be easy, and he would have traversed a route from Turkestan to India which no European had ever seen before. To turn back would mean failure with success in sight. So Wali and the young soldier looked at one another with understanding and began making their preparations for the descent of the pass. They had no Alpine appliances; such as ropes and ice axes

and nailed boots to help them, but they had some strong Yarkandi sticks with metal points, and with these and one pickaxe they had to manage as best as they could. Wali led the way, cutting steps in the ice with a pickaxe as he went, and the rest of the party followed in the steps he had made. It was now noon and the sun melted the ice all round them, causing it to be very slippery. Their thin leather boots became saturated with water and kept sliding from under them. Younghusband was in a state of "cold, horrible fear," which was increased by Mohamed Esa saying he could face it no longer and must go back. He was so shaking with fear that Younghusband realised he would be more hindrance than help, and sent him back to the camp where the ponies were. The ice-slope was crossed at last and the little party found themselves on rock ravine. The rocks were not firm and as they cautiously lowered themselves down the slope their foothold would crumble beneath them. Younghusband says, that at this moment, he found the true answer to the questions which people often asked him afterwards in regard to climbing. He was

often asked what was the "good" of climbing Mount Everest, or of scaling some other inaccessible peak like Nanda Debi. And the answer which he discovered in that anxious moment on the Mustagh Pass was that it is "good" as furnishing a standard of what *can* be done. As he made his way down those crumbling rocks, with certain death awaiting him if he fell, he recalled the descriptions he had read of what Alpine Club men had done in climbing the Alps. And he thought to himself that the men who had performed those feats would think nothing of what he was doing, so why should *he* be afraid? Then he thought of sportsmen in India climbing the Himalayas to shoot ibex and markhor, who must have had to travel over almost as difficult country as the Mustagh Pass, and these thoughts gave him confidence and courage to go on.

At sunset, after many adventures, they reached the glacier at the foot of the pass and were in safety once more. They were at last standing on Indian soil or ice. They were very tired and would gladly have camped where they were but there was nothing but



ice and snow all around them so they had to plod onwards to find a place clear of the snow where they could lie down. It was night by then and the moon rose in the cloudless sky, touching everything with its silver radiance. The ground, the mountains and everything about them were of the purest white. "It seemed like a fairy world of stainless purity and light."

But their troubles were not yet over. Younghusband, looking back, discovered that one of their men was missing and they hastily retraced their steps to find him fallen down a hole in the ice. They dragged him out and carried him along till they at length reached a little patch of ground which was bare of snow, and there decided to halt for the night. There was no fuel for a fire, so they broke up a few of their alpenstocks and made some tea and were soon asleep.

Next morning they had to start without any tea to warm them but soon came to an old hut where the glacier from the Mustagh Pass joined the great Boltoro glacier. This ruin must have been the remnant of the days when the Mustagh route was in use. From

wood lying about they made a big fire and cooked themselves a good meal, then they set off down the glacier and soon reached the Boltoro glacier itself.

This Boltoro glacier is one of the great glaciers of the world. It is 36 miles in length and two miles in width—a steadily moving river of ice. It is surrounded by great mountains with strange peaks and towering summits, the huge Musherbrum and Gusherbrum mountains, and other enormous peaks. But in spite of the glorious scenery it was a weary march for the tired little band of explorers. Their boots were worn through, and the surface of the glacier was made up of cruel rocky fragments which cut them badly at every step. On this march Younghusband fell into a great stream which was filled with blocks of ice and was very nearly drowned. On the third day they reached Ashkoli, which was a large and very dirty village, but was a real haven of rest to the weary men. Wali was an inhabitant of Ashkoli and expected to be warmly welcomed by his fellow villagers, but instead they seemed eager to kill him and if it had not been for Younghusband would

have done so. Wali dared not stay in the village alone and decided to accompany Younghusband to Kashmir from whence he intended to return to Yarkand.

From Ashkoli, Younghusband made a trip up the other Mustagh Pass (the one which they had found impossible to descend) to make quite certain that there was no feasible route across it. He satisfied himself on this point and then thankfully turned once more towards India. On the day of his return to Ashkoli the men who had gone to take supplies to Mohamed Esa, who had been left on the Mustagh Pass, arrived back.

As soon as Younghusband had heard that his old comrades were safely on their way to Leh, he set out by double marches to Kashmir by way of the narrow Braldu valley. On this march, when crossing a rope bridge over a rushing torrent, Wali, the hero of the party, suddenly displayed great terror and was only induced to cross with a man behind and in front holding him on to the bridge. Shigar, the capital of Baltistan, was reached at last and there the party remained for three days while Younghusband telegraphed to the

Governor of Ladak for money with which to pay the people of Ashkoli. Shigar is a pretty little place with a castle on the banks of the Indus which, even there, many miles from the plains of India, was a broad stream. A few marches from Shigar, Younghusband said good-bye to Turgan whose village had at last been reached. The Balti was full of gratitude at regaining his freedom from slavery and to Younghusband for having freed him. Many years afterwards, when Younghusband was Resident of Kashmir, he travelled over 200 miles to see him again. A few days later Wali also bade the party farewell and turned off on his way to Yarkand where he was returning as the people of his own village no longer wanted him.

At Kargalik Younghusband was hospitably entertained by the Governor of Ladak, who arranged a game of polo for him and feasted him royally. The Governor was a Hindu of old family and a very fine and interesting man, and Younghusband greatly enjoyed his meeting with the first person of education and refinement he had encountered since he had left Peking. Some days later the little

party crossed their last pass—the Zojila—and leaving the barren plains of Turkestan, found themselves among the green trees and luxuriant grassy slopes of Kashmir the Beautiful.

Younghusband rode into Srinagar still dressed in his Yarkandi clothes and with his face blackened by the sun and roughly bearded. It was just two months since he had set out from Yarkand on his pioneer trek across the great desert and snowy mountains into India.

### Questions.

1. What did the guide, Wali, want Younghusband to do?
  2. What qualities did Younghusband admire most in the Ladhaki, Shukar Ali?
  3. Describe the appearance of the glacier leading out of the Mustagh Pass.
  4. Did Younghusband succeed in following the route from Turkestan to India which no European had ever seen before?
  5. What answer did Younghusband find to the question which was so often asked him: "What is the good of climbing mountains?"
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## CAPTAIN SCOTT'S LAST EXPEDITION.

**R**OBERT Falcon Scott started his career as a midshipman in the British navy in 1886, at the age of fifteen. Twenty-six years later he was to die at the height of his fame



Captain Scott.

on his return journey from the Pole, one of the greatest heroes and explorers the world has ever known.

In the year 1899, he heard that an Antarctic expedition was being arranged, and he at once volunteered to command the expedition. His record of service in the Navy had been so excellent that he was at once selected for the post, and in 1901 the expedition set out in its specially constructed ship named the "Discovery". Robert Scott had had no previous experience of the Antarctic but

some of his officers had been to the Arctic regions. The object of the expedition was to explore the then unknown Antarctic continent by land. After much delay the good ship "Discovery" at length sailed away from England carrying, as well as her ordinary crew, an official botanist to collect rare specimens of plants and flowers, a biologist to find the strange animals which live in the polar regions and a geologist. After several years of the greatest hardship and discomfort the expedition returned to England with many important discoveries to its credit. Captain Scott and his gallant men had discovered the great ice cap on which the South Pole is situated, they had surveyed and sounded the great Barrier cliffs, and discovered King Edward's Land, Ross Island and other volcanic inlets, as well as the Victoria Mountains—a range of great height and many hundreds of miles in length which had before only been seen from a distance out at sea. As well as this their scientific discoveries were of great interest and importance. Scott's principal aim in life was the advancement of knowledge and he risked his life and finally lost it in the

endeavour to explore the South Pole and to give his discoveries to the world.

The object of his last expedition in 1910 was to complete and extend his former work in the Antarctic in the interests of science and discovery. It was his ambition that his ship, the "Terra Nova" should be the most completely fitted out vessel, both as regards men and material, that ever set out on a voyage of discovery. In the end he succeeded in gathering a wonderful staff of men together, for as soon as it was known that Captain Scott was leading another Antarctic expedition, he was overwhelmed with applications from scientists and other well-known men who wished to accompany him.

The "Terra Nova" left England on June 15th, 1910, and arrived at Lyttelton in New Zealand in the end of October. After a month spent in putting the finishing touches to the ship they set out on November 29th on the last stage of their voyage.

The ship was tightly packed with men and animals. There were 19 little ponies and 33 dogs to draw the sledges, and as soon as



they encountered bad weather it was found that the ship was too heavily laden for safety. In their first storm they had to throw ten tons of coal overboard and spend a day and a night in baling the water out of the ship. They then repacked the cargo and there was no more trouble. Soon after this they came into an ice stream and fields of packed ice began to appear on either side of them. A few days later they found that the ship was tightly wedged in the ice and was unable to proceed. This kept them inactive for several weeks but the time of waiting was not wasted for they were able to exercise their dogs on the ice with a sledge, and to accustom themselves to conditions generally. Some fine photographs were taken and Wilson, the artist of the expedition, painted a number of delightful pictures of that lovely scene of icebergs and eternal snow.

After some weeks of this, Scott decided to push west to get away from the heavy floes. Over and over again, when the end of their troubles seemed to be reached they found that the thick ice packs were once more around them. At length the ice floes grew thinner

and they were able to raise steam and get out into the open sea once more.

Scott had nothing but praise for the "Nova". "No other ship, not even the 'Discovery' could have come through so well. I have grown strangely attached to the 'Terra Nova.' As she bumped the ice floes with mighty shocks, crushing and grinding her way through some, twisting and turning to avoid others, she seemed like a living thing fighting a great fight" he wrote to friends in England. On January 24th, Scott and his landing party bade farewell to the ship for the last time and set off with their dogs and ponies across the wilderness of ice, to encounter their first hardships and difficulties. It was soon found that the ponies sank deeply in the soft snow, and were more trouble than help, so two members of the expedition hurried off to the camp which had been established twenty miles away to get snow shoes for the ponies, but they were unable to get to the camp as the ice was broken in several places and they could not cross it. One of the members of the expedition developed a bad foot and had to be left behind with a companion, so the little

company of twelve men were reduced to ten. Here is Scott's account of a typical day :

“ We turn out of our sleeping bags at about 9 p. m. (they were then marching at night). Soon after this figures are busy among sledges and ponies. It is chilling work for the fingers. The rugs come off the ponies, the harness is put on, tents and camp equipment are loaded on the sledges, nosebags filled ; one by one the animals are taken off the picketing rope and yoked to the sledge. At length we are off at a steady pace. The light is bad and at intervals one or another of us suddenly slips on a slippery patch and falls prone. We halt half way but it is too cold to stop long and a very few minutes finds us on the way again. We generally make our final camp about 8 a. m. and within an hour and a half, as soon as our animals have been made comfortable, we are in our sleeping bags.”

On the 11th of February the party arrived at a place which they afterwards called Bluff Camp, and where exact bearings had to be taken for it was expected that the camp would be important in the future. Three of the ponies were now so ill and weak that Scott

decided to send them back to the base camp with three of the expedition, thus leaving only seven to continue. They were now encountering blizzards everyday, and most of them were suffering from their eyes and from frostbitten ears and fingers, but they pushed on gallantly, often sinking to their waists in the soft snow left by the blizzards.

The dogs began to attack the ponies and had to be beaten off by the weary men, who now realised that they could go no further that year. They built a depôt camp at which they left stores, sledges and harness, and made a flag-staff which could hardly fail to show up for many miles and would be easy to find again.

I will not dwell here on their return journey which was full of peril and adventure, but they at last reached Safety Camp and found the other members of the expedition had arrived, though with the loss of several valuable ponies.

The year was spent between the camps in atrocious weather. Storm after storm swept over them and it was all that they could do to keep themselves and their animals alive and

fit. In late June it was decided to send a party out to collect the eggs of the Emperor penguin for the interests of science. Three men were chosen for this, Edward Wilson, the Zoologist, Lieutenant Henry Bowers and Apsley Cherry-Garrard, the Assistant Zoologist. It was midwinter in the Antarctic; the cold was intense, blizzard followed blizzard and the light was little better than complete darkness yet these three brave men went cheerfully into conditions, which no civilised being had ever before faced, with only a tent of thin canvas for shelter. A fortnight after leaving Safety Camp they reached the foothills near Cape Crozier and built a hut with stone walls and a canvas roof. Their first attempt to reach the penguin rookery was a failure, but next day they started out again, and after incredible adventures and experiences reached the rookery through a channel of ice. They hastily killed and skinned three penguins to get blubber for their stove, and with six eggs made a hasty dash for their camp. A few hours later a great gale rose and carried away their tent. For fourteen hours they tried to hold down the roof of their hut but

in the end it flew away and in an instant they were smothered with snow. They crept into their sleeping bags, where they remained for a night and half a day, while the wind howled and the snow entered every crevice of their sleeping bags.

The wind fell at last and the miserable travellers crept out of their bags and cooked some food. They were fortunate in finding their tent lying on the snow only half a mile from the camp, and were able to start homeward the next day, when another storm came on and they were kept prisoner in their tent for two more days.

By this time their sleeping bags were so thoroughly frozen that it was impossible to bend or fold them; their socks and gloves were coated with ice and the temperature was constantly below 60°. It is not surprising that when they finally staggered into Safety Camp five weeks after they had left it that their faces were scarred and wrinkled, their eyes dull and their bodies thin and worn.

"Wilson," Scott wrote, "is disappointed at seeing so little of the penguins, but to me and to everyone who has remained here, the

result of this effort is the appeal it makes to our imagination as one of the most gallant stories of Polar History. That men should wander forth in the depth of a Polar night to face the most dismal cold and the fiercest gales in darkness is something new; that they should have persisted in this effort in spite of every adversity for five full weeks is heroic. It makes a tale for our generation which I hope may not be lost in the telling. Moreover the material results are by no means despicable. We shall know now when that extraordinary bird, the Emperor penguin, lays its eggs, and under what conditions.....Our party has shown the nature of the conditions which exist on the Great Barrier in winter. Hitherto we have only imagined their severity, now we have proof.....".

It was on November 1st that Scott's party set out on their final journey to the Pole, and after long and arduous marching during which the ponies one by one grew weaker and weaker, they decided on December 8th to shoot the ponies and to continue pulling the sledges themselves, although they were all in an exhausted condition. There were now

fourteen members of the expedition left, but after one march more two men had to return with the dogs and the remaining twelve had to drag the heavy sledges as well as they could through the soft snow. The way became increasingly difficult, with frequent stops to pull the runners of the sledges out of the snow, and it became impossible to travel more than four miles a day. Several of the members of the expedition were now suffering greatly with their eyes; some of them being almost blind from the glare of the sunshine on the snow and ice.

In the end of December the final choice of men for the last attempt to reach the Pole was made by Scott and the others returned to the base camp.

“It was a sad job saying good-bye,” Cherry-Garrard (who was one of the returning party) wrote in his diary; “and I know that some eyes were dim. It was thick and snowing when we started and the last we saw of Scott and the others was a black dot just disappearing over the next ridge.”

The members of Scott's party now consisted of Captain Oates, Lt. Bowers, Edward Wilson,



Lt. Evans, Petty Officer Evans, Petty Officer Crean and Chief Stoker Lashly. They made good progress the first day in spite of constantly falling into cracks and crevices in the ice, and by the time they struck camp they had travelled over seventeen miles. Their spirits were high on the following few days and Christmas was kept cheerfully. On New Year's day they were only 170 miles from the Pole and success seemed in sight. Unfortunately several of the party showed signs of great exhaustion, and Scott decided that Lt. Evans, Lashly and Crean would have to go back. Much against their will these three men turned their faces away from the Pole and started on their long journey back to civilisation. Lt. Evans developed scurvy after a few days and it was only with the utmost bravery and self-sacrifice that his companions were able to bring him in safely to the base camp after many weeks of travelling. They were later decorated with the Albert Medal for their gallant conduct.

The ages of the five men who continued their epic journey to the Pole were : Scott 43, Wilson 39, Petty Officer Evans 37, Captain

Oates 32 and Lieutenant Bowers 28. "We really are an excellently found party," wrote Scott at this time.

On January 16th, after encountering many difficulties they found themselves within twenty miles of the Pole, and discovered to their great chagrin and disappointment that the Norwegian party who were also seeking to reach the Pole by a different route, had already forestalled them. Scott and his party felt bitter disappointment at this ending of their hopes to be first at the Pole. The Norwegians, led by the famous explorer Amundsen, had beaten them by about a month and Amundsen had left in a tent, some miles from the Pole, a letter for Scott to deliver to king Haakon of Norway.

"We built a cairn," writes Scott, "put up our poor slighted Union Jack and photographed ourselves.....Well, we have turned our back now on the goal of our ambition and must face 800 miles of solid dragging—and good-bye to most of our daydreams!"

The feelings of Scott and his party at this moment when they had triumphed over incredible difficulties to reach their goal only

to find themselves shorn of all the glory of success must indeed have been bitter. Scott had had no news of a Norwegian expedition when he had arranged his own, and it had only been when they reached the end of their sea voyage that he had learnt of Amundsen's project.

But that another party had preceded him at the Pole makes no difference to Scott's achievement. He had done all that he had set out to do, and the discoveries and specimens which finally reached England were of the utmost value and importance to science.

And now we must accompany the gallant little party on its last journey, a journey whose end was not an end of glory and reward as it should have been but of painful death in terrible conditions.

Blizzard after blizzard swept their camps. Evans and Oates began to suffer agonies from frost-bite and their food supply to run short. Wilson had strained a tendon in his leg and Scott himself had fallen and hurt his shoulder, so that three out of the five were on the sick list..... Evans, from being one of their best men, became suddenly dull and incapable

which was thought to have been due to his having injured his brain in falling. The drifting snow had covered all their old tracks and cairns and it was impossible to find their old route. After several days in these conditions, they discovered one of their *Depôts*, and were able to collect some more food for which they were very grateful, and Wilson gathered some geological specimens, which afterwards proved to be the most interesting and important found by the expedition. These specimens made another 35lbs. to carry but the party cheerfully undertook to take the extra weight. Day after day found them still on their journey, still troubled by the persistent snow and the condition of Evans who grew steadily worse. On the 17th February he became very strange and was constantly hanging behind the party and at length fainted. The others hurried back to him and laid him on the sledge and pulled him to the camp, but he died quietly at midday, in spite of all their efforts to save his life.

After this the little party marched grimly forward from old camp to old camp, picking up food at each, but suffering from a shortage

of oil of which they had laid in too small a supply. Captain Oates was now very ill and his feet were in a terrible condition.

“It is pathetic enough because we can do nothing for him” writes Scott.....“we none of us expected these terribly low temperatures and of the rest of us Wilson is feeling them most; mainly, I fear, from his self-sacrificing devotion in doctoring Oates’ feet. We cannot help each other now, each has enough to do to take care of himself. One can only say “God help us!” and plod on our weary uphill way, cold and very miserable though outwardly cheerful.”

Each day brought more discomfort and trouble to the weary little band of men and Oates, Scott felt, was getting very near the limit of his endurance. He was hardly able to crawl along, and in spite of the cheering words of his comrades, he must have realised his presence was now only a great hindrance to their progress. He fell asleep on the night of the 14th of March hoping that he would never wake again. Before falling asleep he talked of his mother, to whom he was greatly attached, and of his regiment, the Inniskilling

Dragoons, and hoped that they would appreciate his method of death. But next morning he was still alive. A blizzard was blowing and the snow was blowing in great drifts outside the tent. It was then that Captain Oates made his last brave gesture. Without any false heroics or farewell speeches he opened the flap of the tent door and said casually to his leader: "I am just going outside and may be some time." He then deliberately walked out of the tent into the blinding, drifting snow until he dropped down and died of exhaustion and pain. And so ended the life of a very gallant gentleman.

There is a picture by a famous artist depicting Captain Oates deliberately seeking his death in the storm to relieve his brave companions of his useless presence. "It was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman," writes Scott. "We all hope to meet the end with a similar spirit, and assuredly that end is not far....."

The following days found the remaining three members of the great Antarctic expedition suffering terribly from frost-bitten feet. Scott's right foot was so bad that he realised

that amputation was the only solution for it. The worst blizzard they had hitherto encountered raged about them incessantly. On the 20th March they made their last camp only eleven miles from One Ton depôt where they could have found food and oil and comparative comfort. Wilson and Bowers made several attempts to reach the depôt in order to get fuel but the blizzard was too bad to allow them to go. This is Scott's last entry in his note book :

“ March 29th. Since the 21st we have had a continuous gale from W. S. W. and S. W. We had fuel to make two cups of tea apiece and bare food for two days on the 20th. Everyday we have been ready to start for our depôt 11 miles away, but outside the door of the tent it remains a scene of whirling drift. I do not think we can hope for any better things now. We shall stick it out to the end but we are getting weaker and the end cannot be far. It seems a pity but I do not think I can write more.

R. Scott.”

“ Last entry,

For God's sake look after our people.”

Desperate efforts were made by the remaining members of the expedition to find Scott and his little party, but it was too late and winter was already descending, so there was nothing for them to do but wait until the long Polar winter had ended. At the earliest possible moment, in late October, a large party started south and twelve days later found the tent partially snowed up. Inside it were the bodies of Captain Scott, Dr. Wilson and Lieutenant Bowers. They had pitched the tent so well, even in their exhausted condition, that it had withstood all the fierce blizzards of a hard winter. Wilson and Bowers were found lying naturally, as if asleep, in their sleeping bags. Scott had evidently died later. He had opened the flaps of his sleeping bag and flung his coat open at the neck. A little wallet containing three note-books which described the whole expedition was under his shoulder, and one arm was flung across his great friend Wilson.

Among the other things in the tent were found the 35lbs. of important geological specimens which at Wilson's request the brave men had carried to the very last.



When everything had been collected the search party covered their comrades with the tent and built a great cairn of stones above them. Upon this cairn they placed a rough cross made of two sledges, and in a metal cylinder placed a record of their names and date of death. Then they slowly and sadly turned their faces homewards to tell the world of the fate which had overtaken their splendid leader and brave comrades.....

In the tent had been found a number of letters written by Scott to his relatives and friends as well as the supporters of the enterprise. He had left letters of consolation and cheer for the relatives of his brave comrades, and to the last he had no thought for himself, only the earnest desire to comfort others in their sorrow. There are few events in history to be compared, for grandeur and pathos, with the closing scene of that great life in that silent wilderness of snow. As he wrote in his Message to the Public : ".....We took risks, we knew we took them; things have come out against us, and therefore we have no cause of complaint, but bow to the will of Providence, determined still to do our

best to the last. But if we have been willing to give our lives to this enterprise which is for the honour of our country, I appeal to our countrymen to see that those who depend on us are properly cared for....." The last thoughts of this fine man were not of himself, and of the lonely and terrible death which he was dying, not of vain regrets for the past, but a brave, manly and affectionate effort to provide for the future of the widowed wives of his gallant comrades. It takes a really great man to show such qualities of sterling character as Captain Robert Scott did during his last hours.

### Questions.

1. What was Captain Scott's aim in life?
2. Tell the story of Wilson, Bowers and Cherry-Garrard's adventure in search of specimens of the Emperor Penguin.
3. Did Scott's party reach the Pole before that of Amundsen?
4. Did Amundsen follow the same route?
5. Tell in your own words the story of how Captain Oates sacrificed himself in order not to be a hindrance to the expedition.
6. What were Scott's last thoughts?

## VASCO DA GAMA

**Finds a new way to India.**

**F**OR many years after the death of Marco Polo the people of Europe profited from his discoveries. From his descriptions of the caravan routes of the East he brought new



Vasco da Gama

trade and wealth to Venice, for he taught the merchants how to travel and where to find

new and costly merchandise. His book was very valuable to the men of learning in Europe for he was the first European to describe China or to have seen Burma, Java, Siam and Ceylon as well as the big country of Japan, or Chipangu as it was then called. The geographers were able to draw new maps of the world from Marco Polo's book. Then came wars and revolutions in the East and the traders could no longer travel by Marco Polo's caravan route. The Chinese drove the Tartars out of their country and would not let any foreigners enter it, and year after year the Muhammadan Turks drew closer to Europe until they had conquered Constantinople.

The merchants and traders of Europe, no longer able to get their silks and spices and jewels from the East, began to read Marco Polo's book again and to say among themselves that if they desired to reach the rich lands which their famous countryman had once explored that they must seek another road—"not by the land, but by the sea, not by the east but by the west."

Among the countries most interested in finding a new way to the East was Portugal.

This little country was famed for its fine sailors, who did much valuable exploration, and its famous Captain, Bartholomew Diaz, who explored the African coast and named the great cape at its southern end the Cape of Storms. When he returned to Portugal with his great news, the King of Portugal said, "If we call that cape the Cape of Storms our sailors will be afraid to go past it. Let us call it the Cape of Good Hope for now we may hope that our ships will soon reach India." But it was ten years before the King of Portugal sent out another expedition of discovery. This expedition was commanded by the great navigator, Vasco da Gama, and it left Lisbon in early July of the year 1497 and consisted of four sailing ships. The expedition sailed away from Lisbon to the sound of the tears and cries of the vast crowd which had gathered to bid them farewell, and who besought them to give up their dangerous enterprise. The wailing and prayers of their relations and friends were the last sounds which the mariners heard as they sailed away from Portugal.

Vasco da Gama soon forgot the people on

shore. He was too busy poring over the logs and charts, which Diaz had made ten years before, and planning out his route. He had three books which were of great value to him. One was a strange old geography by Ptolemy, another the book of Marco Polo which filled him with a great desire to find India and the Spice Islands, and a volume containing the reports of two Portuguese explorers who had managed to make their way over land to Asia. He had also a number of ancient maps and mariner's compasses which were in those days called Genoese Needles because the Genoese sailors were the first Europeans to use them. He also had a queer looking wooden instrument called an astrolabe which helped him to measure the height of the sun.

The ships sailed gaily on until they reached the Cape Verde Islands where Diaz disembarked. Then, keeping far from the shores of Africa they sailed out into the ocean. Months passed and still they sailed on until at length they came in sight of the African coast once again at a part not far from the Cape of Good Hope. Here Vasco da Gama ordered some of his men to land in search of fresh

water. While they were looking for the water they saw a Hottentot gathering wild honey. They took him on board Vasco da Gama's ship and tried to make friends with him. Next day they gave him some gay clothes and set him free on the shore. They were soon surrounded with Hottentots who seemed quite friendly, but just as Vasco da Gama was getting back into his boat they began to be very hostile and flung their spears at the sailors. Vasco da Gama and two other officers were wounded and as they were unarmed they rowed away to their ships without retaliating.

They now were very near the Cape but a great storm arose and they could not sail round it for many days. The Portuguese sailors grew afraid and begged that they might go back to their own country. When they found that Vasco da Gama would not listen to them they tried to mutiny, but their Captain was a strong man who was accustomed to command. He had the ringleaders seized and imprisoned and set the mutinous men to work to clean the ships and mend the sails which had been damaged by the storm. As soon as

the wind fell and the gale passed over they sailed away to the north, keeping close to the coast where they landed at intervals and explored rivers and bays and islands. Sometimes they set up a pillar with a cross on it to show they had visited these places. As they were exploring new country Vasco da Gama gave names to many of the capes and bays, sometimes using those which the natives told him, and sometimes inventing new ones. He called the country past which he was sailing on Christmas Day "Natal" because it was the birthday of Jesus Christ.

When the Portuguese reached the east coast of Africa they found that the people were very different from those who lived near the Cape of Good Hope. They were tall and their skins very black. They wore hardly any clothes at all and had ornaments of copper or tin in their arms and legs. Farther north they found still another race who were quite different again. These were the Arabs or Moors. They were fair-skinned and handsome, and wore clothes of fine linen and head-dresses embroidered with gold. At first these people welcomed the Portuguese warmly but after-



wards they turned against them, for they thought they had come to steal their trade. In those days nearly all the trading with the east was carried on by Arab merchants, who sent their wares by caravan to the Mediterranean ports where the western merchants bought them, as in the days of Marco Polo. Vasco da Gama was very pleased when he saw Arab boats in the harbour where he had anchored.

He found that these boats were laden with gold and silver and jewels and spices and he thought that at last he must be near the long-sought land of India. He hired two Arabs to guide him up the coast but they ran away and the Portuguese ships were attacked by Arabs. Seeing that he would get no assistance on his quest in those parts, Vasco da Gama sailed away till he came to the place called Mombasa. Here the inhabitants pretended to be friendly but were really plotting to capture the Portuguese ships so Vasco da Gama sailed away again. They then came to a little town on the coast whose king was genuinely friendly and who received them very kindly

and lent them some Arab pilots to guide them to India.

The Arab pilots directed them eastwards into the open sea and it was three weeks until at last they saw a faint blue line of land stretching before them and knew that they had reached their goal—India! Soon a big city with domes and tapering temples came into view on the shore and the Portuguese saw people running down to the waters edge to look at the big sailing vessels. Vasco da Gama was a proud man that day. He and he alone had found the way to India by sea, and if he could only keep the secret well, his country of Portugal would become great in trade and export and grow richer and more powerful than all the other countries of Europe! He sent one of his captains on shore with the Arab pilot to interpret and found that the city was Calicut. Vasco da Gama sent a message to the Indian King who lived there saying that he was the bearer of gifts and messages from the greatest Christian king in the world. He asked for a cargo of pepper and drugs in return for the rich merchandise which he had brought from Portugal.

The Indian king promised to give Vasco da Gama and his captains an audience and sent them presents of fowls and fruits. Vasco da Gama dressed himself in his best clothes and made his way in a palanquin to the palace. He and his captains were soon followed by crowds of people who jostled them to such an extent that they had to fight their way through the palace gates when the palanquins were set down. They found the king in a small courtyard, lying under a gilt canopy on a green velvet couch. He was chewing betel-nuts which he took from an enormous golden bowl on his right, while in his left hand he held a goblet into which he spat the juice. He was naked to the waist but was so hung with gorgeous jewels that he seemed to sparkle from head to foot. Vasco da Gama greeted the king, who received him courteously and ordered bananas and water to be brought for their refreshment. A noble offered to deliver Vasco da Gama's message, but the Portuguese declared that he could only give this to the king in person because it was the message of one king to another. When the king heard this he went into a private room and called

Vasco da Gama to him. With the aid of an interpreter the Portuguese told the King of Calicut that the King of Portugal desired peace and alliance with him, and that if the people of India would sell the white men spices to carry away by sea they would grow rich, for the Portuguese were men of wealth, who could bring them many things which they had never seen before. Vasco da Gama talked with the king for many hours and it was night before he was allowed to seek his lodgings in the town. Next day he collected the gifts he had brought for the king to present to him, but meanwhile the Arab-merchants of Calicut had been poisoning the king's mind against him, for they feared the Portuguese would steal their trade. When Vasco da Gama brought his gifts before the king he laughed at them scornfully and refused to accept them. The Arabs went about working against the Portuguese, and saying that they were robbers and pirates, and that no king would have sent such mean presents. Life became very difficult for Vasco da Gama and his men. The king kept Vasco da Gama waiting for hours at his next audience with

him and was very unfriendly even when the Portuguese presented the letters which he carried from the King of Portugal. They found it almost impossible to buy the spices which they wished to take back to Portugal because the Arabs had turned the people against them to such an extent that they would hardly sell them anything. At one time they mobbed the Portuguese and locked them up in a house for several days. At last, when Vasco da Gama had collected enough cargo, he decided to start on his journey back to Lisbon and called all his men back to their ships. They set about their preparations to sail and Vasco da Gama sent a messenger to the King telling him that he was going away. The Arabs hurried to the King and urged him to hold the messenger as a hostage. Vasco da Gama waited patiently on his great ship but at length when his messengers did not return he guessed that something had happened. Several people of Calicut had come on board one of his ships that morning to see what a Portuguese ship was like so Vasco da Gama seized them and sent another messenger ashore to say that he would carry

them away to Portugal if his own man was not returned at once. Very soon a little boat brought back his messenger and a letter from the King of Calicut to the King of Portugal. This letter was written on a palm leaf and it said that as Calicut was rich in cinnamon, cloves, pepper, ginger and jewels he would be willing to trade with Portugal for gold, silver, coral and scarlet cloth. Vasco da Gama let his prisoners free and sailed away but before he had gone very far the ships were becalmed. Urged on by the Arabs the people of Calicut launched seventy boats and attacked the helpless Portuguese, but just then a great storm arose and the sailing ships were swept out to sea.

For a whole year they sailed onwards but their hearts were light for they were carrying a cargo of precious spices and they had discovered the way to India. They knew that there would be great honour, and renown for them when they arrived back in Portugal and great wealth for their beloved country.

When the four ships arrived at last near the coast of Portugal, with flags flying and

pennons fluttering from their battered sides and sails, numbers of little boats came out to meet them. Vasco da Gama landed and was met by all the nobles of the Court. When he went into the King's presence he knelt humbly to kiss his hand as usual but the King raised him to his feet and embraced him.

Vasco da Gama was rewarded with titles and riches for he had brought great honour to his country.

For many years the Portuguese traded with Africa and India. They formed colonies and captured unfriendly villages and towns, very often leaving a terrible story of bloodshed and cruelty behind them. They are still masters of some of the places they conquered so long ago—Angola, Mozambique and Goa.

Although in later years much of their fame was marred by their cruel deeds, we can still honour Vasco da Gama and his contemporaries as brave sailors and pioneers, who never gave up hope in their long search for India from the west.

### **Questions.**

1. Why did the merchants of Europe wish to find a new way to the East?
2. How did the names of the Cape of Good Hope and Natal originate?
3. Describe the interview between Vasco da Gama and the King of Calicut.



## SIR FRANCIS DRAKE.

**S**IR Francis Drake was the first Englishman to sail round the world and is the



Sir Francis Drake.

acknowledged pioneer of England's supremacy on the seas. He belonged to a good family

which had met with misfortunes and had become quite poor. He won his way by his own enterprise and energy and not by influence at Court. He was born in Tavistock in Devonshire about 1545. Drake was apprenticed to the master of a coasting vessel while still a boy. The man died when Drake was eighteen years old and to Drake's great surprise left him his ship. At twenty years of age Drake made a journey to Guinea and a few years later we find him fighting under Sir John Hawkins in the Gulf of Mexico. He was given the command of one of Hawkins' ships named the "Judith" and while he was on this expedition the fleet was attacked by the Spanish Admiral, who captured all the British vessels except the "Minion" under Sir John Hawkins' own command, and the "Judith" which was captained by Drake.

The Spaniards had long been harrying the British on the seas and Drake determined to retaliate for the loss of his ships and men. In 1572 he set sail from Plymouth with five ships bound for Mexico where he intended to "spoil" the Spaniards by seizing some of their great treasure. He landed at Nombre de Dios

in July and met with sharp resistance from the Spaniards. During the battle Drake was severely wounded in the thigh but in spite of this led his men on to victory. They found their way to the house of the governor and there discovered an enormous treasure of silver. From thence they were guided by prisoners to the treasure-house in which they found more gold, pearls and precious stones than they could possibly carry away.

Drake's men were almost afraid to approach such a wonderful treasure as they saw spread out before them, but Drake ordered them to go forward saying that he had led them to the mouth of the treasure of the world and it would be their own fault if they did not take some of it. As he was speaking his wound began to bleed terribly and his men were filled with dismay for they were afraid he would die. They put him on a stretcher and carried him back to the boats. It seemed impossible that any man could lose so much blood as Drake did, and yet live but he was a strong and healthy man and soon recovered from his wound. Other adventures followed. The explorers captured a large

Spanish ship in the harbour of Cartagena, burnt Porto Bello, and landing on the Isthmus of Panama proceeded to march across it.

During their march the guides pointed out a high ridge on which there was a huge tree



Sir Francis Drake sees the Pacific Ocean for the First Time:  
with steps cut into it and from which the

guides said it was possible to see the North and South Seas. Drake climbed the tree and saw before him the shining waters of the Pacific Ocean. He uttered a prayer that God in His goodness would give him life and leave to sail in an English ship on that great sea !

Proceeding they sacked the town of Venta Cruz and intercepted several convoys of mules, numbering about two hundred, which were laden with a treasure of silver weighing nearly twenty tons. The English were unable to carry so much away so they took what they could of the treasure and hid the rest to collect in the future. The Spaniards, however, found it before they were able to return. After many adventures Drake and his men returned to England with their treasure-trove and the ship they had captured. Drake's success in discovering treasure and getting the better of the Spaniards naturally attracted the notice of the Court. Queen Elizabeth summoned him to her presence and listened to the accounts of his adventures with great interest. Lord Burleigh and Sir Christopher Hatton also befriended him and with such encouragement behind him he determined to

## FOUR

fit out a much larger expedition to discover new lands and to plunder the Spaniards again. He kept the object of his expedition secret because although Spain and England were constantly fighting with each other on the seas there was no open war declared between them on land.

6022 Drake's new expedition consisted of five ships manned by 164 "gentlemen and sailors". They set sail from Plymouth in 1577 and were gone three years. Drake was at this time 37 years old, "of small size, with a reddish beard, and is one of the greatest sailors that exist, both from his skill and from his power of commanding..." says a Spanish prisoner on one of his ships.

During the three years that Drake was absent from England he sailed round the world, proved the weakness of the great Spanish Empire and opened the vast oceans of the world to English ships. Although really a private enterprise the expedition sailed under very strict discipline and Drake bore the title of general with his men. His plan was to get to the Pacific without the Spaniards' knowledge by the route which no Englishman

had yet followed round South America through the Strait of Magellan. He set out by way of Cape Verde across the Atlantic to South America. Almost a year after they had left England, Drake's squadron entered the Strait of Magellan where they encountered great difficulties from its narrowness and the uncharted islands. They got safely through the Strait, only to encounter a terrible storm which blew them 200 miles out of their course and sank one of the ships. Drake now sailed up the coast of Chile to the port of Valpariso, where he captured a Spanish ship and afterwards found it to contain a large store of gold and silver. They landed at several places and carried off treasure at each but without harming anyone. At Lima, when Drake sailed boldly into the harbour, he found twelve Spanish ships anchored. He seized and rifled them, getting a good store of silver and merchandise. He then cut their cables and sailed away to try and capture a treasure ship which he had been told had left Lima a short time before. He overtook the ship and took some of its treasure and then allowed it to sail on its way. It was Drake's custom to let

the Spanish ships go on their way unmolested after he had taken his choice of their cargo and he never took life except in fair fight.

The Spaniards had never expected any enemy to attack them from the Pacific and so none of their ports were fortified, but by the time Drake had finished ransacking their towns they had gathered a large fleet to intercept him on his return to England through the Strait of Magellan. He, therefore, resolved to sail west, the way no Englishman had ever gone, across the sea to the Indian Ocean and back to England by the Cape of Good Hope. His ship, the "Golden Hind," was now very heavily laden with the treasure which he had taken from the Spaniards and had suffered from the storms and battles which it had fought since its departure from Plymouth, but Drake seems to have undertaken the long voyage westward without a qualm. The voyage across the Pacific was safely accomplished and the return journey to England made by way of Java, the Cape of Good Hope and Sierra Leone.

There was much discussion in England as to the rights of Drake's sacking the Spaniards



and Queen Elizabeth seems to have been greatly distracted between her desire to have the wonderful jewels and her desire to escape the responsibility of Drake's actions.

A few months after the "Golden Hind" arrived she paid Drake a visit on his ship—the first English ship which had sailed right round the world—and conferred on him the honour of knighthood for his discoveries.

The King of Spain, who had years before laid a price of Rs. 20,000 ducats on Drake's head now in the year 1585 laid an embargo on all things English to be found within the Spanish kingdom. Queen Elizabeth replied to this threat by equipping a fleet of twenty-five ships with Drake as admiral. With this fleet went 2,000 land forces. They landed at Vigo and seized treasure there, and after burning various towns sailed away to Florida. The English colonists who were settled in Virginia begged to be taken back to England as their struggle with a strange country had been too much for them. To this visit is attributed the real introduction of the potato and tobacco into England.

Two years later Drake once more set out on a blockade of the Spanish ports. He captured nearly a hundred Spanish ships and a Portuguese "East Indiaman," homeward bound, which he took back to England with him. This was an important capture as the wealth of the ship, which was nearly £100,000, aroused England to a realisation of the possibilities of trading with India, out of which arose, a few years later, the beginnings of the famous East India Company.

On Drake's return to England it was well-known that Spain had decided to attack by way of the sea, and Drake, who was now Lord High Admiral of England, united with Lord Charles Howard in a patrol of the coast to watch for the coming of the great Armada. But during the next few months storm and tempest made it impossible for either side to attack. At length on July 20, 1588, the wind fell and the Armada gathered together. The Spanish fleet looked like a number of great floating castles, and was about seven miles in length. Sir Francis sent his pinnaces out to challenge the Spanish Admiral, and the fight waged merrily for about two hours when

Drake drew off his ships. We have all read of Drake's success in driving away the great Spanish Armada and of inflicting such a serious defeat on Spain that she never again dared to attack England.

His next and last expedition was made in 1595 to the West Indies in company with Sir John Hawkins and Sir Nicholas Clifford. Twenty-seven ships and two hundred and fifty men set out on an attempt to capture Panama and some of the West Indian Islands but from the first the venture met with no success. Sir John Hawkins died off Porto Rico in November and a few hours later a shot from the shore killed Sir Nicholas Clifford. Their attacks on Grand Canary and Porto Rico were beaten off and when a land march was attempted to capture Panama they found the Spaniards gathered in great numbers to resist them. Drake then sailed to Porto Bello, and with the prospect of returning to England without booty or success, fell ill and died in his ship the "Defiance". He was placed in a leaden coffin and buried at sea, while his fleet sailed sadly back to England to carry the news of his death to his sorrowing country.

Drake was one of the most popular men that ever lived. He was deeply respected and loved by all who sailed under him, from the roughest sailor to the finest gentleman. The Spaniards respected him as a worthy and honest foe and he was not only the hero of a thousand fights but an explorer and pioneer of the greatest value to his country.

It is very fitting that he should lie far beneath the waves over which he sailed and fought until he died.

### Questions.

1. Why did Drake set sail for Mexico in 1572 ?
  2. What famous English naval victory took place in Drake's time ?
  3. Why did the capture of a Portuguese ship by Drake lead to the beginning of the East India Company ?
  4. What was Drake's last expedition ?
  5. Where did he die ?
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## CAPTAIN COOK.

JAMES COOK set out on his first voyage in a dirty black collier (or coal boat)



Captain Cook.

which travelled from Newcastle to London carrying coals. The sailors had no proper sleeping places, the food was scanty and bad and when there were fogs the boat very often ran aground, but James Cook was very happy. He had longed all his boyhood to be able to go to sea and at last his dream

was realised. As he grew older the shipbuilder to whom he was apprenticed sent him on voyages across the North Sea to the rocky shores of Norway, or to the low sandy shores of the Baltic.

Since the days of Drake, Englishmen had ceased to seek for new lands by sea. Their ships were small and though they went on

many dangerous journeys it was only for trading purposes or for colonising that they did so. There were few charts and fewer lighthouses. The ships were dirty and the food very bad. The sailors used to fall ill from having nothing but salt meat and dry biscuit to eat, but in spite of that many men went to sea. James Cook showed such ability that he very soon rose to be third, second and then first mate on his ship. A first mate is next in command to the captain of a vessel and this rank is not usually gained until a man had had much experience and is middle-aged. But in spite of having done so well James Cook soon became tired of the life on a trading vessel. He dreamed long dreams of making charts of the English Channel and the North Sea on which he intended that every dangerous sandbank should be clearly marked. In those days the charts were so bad that they very often did not show half the danger which the ships had to meet. James Cook spent much of his time poring over maps of the world. He was particularly interested in the vast waters of the Pacific and North Atlantic Oceans, and he was sure that there

must be new continents and islands there which had never been discovered. His captain began to notice how skilful Cook was at keeping charts and logs (or diaries), recording deeps and shallows, sands and rocks on the voyages they made. But there was very little for Cook's wondering mind and keen eye to see and do as his ship went to and fro between the Tyne or Thames, and the harbours of Germany or Norway loaded with coal or timber. At last he made up his mind to leave the dull merchant service and to join the Royal Navy. It was then the year 1759 and fighting was going on between the English and the French in North America, because the French were trying to drive out the English settlers and claim the country for themselves. Cook's chance to see a new country came at last! In those days it took three months to sail from England to Canada. When at length the English fleet anchored off Cape Breton Island, the coast of Canada and the great St. Laurence river was quite unknown to their pilots. Before General Wolfe and the other English commanders could make any plans to attack the French

they had to have proper charts and maps of the country and the river. James Cook, who was now a Naval Lieutenant, was chosen for the work of making these charts—a difficult and exceedingly dangerous task for had he been captured by the French he would have been shot as a spy without trial. He cruised about the island and up the river making his charts and returned safely to his ship with all the information which was needed.

There was at this time in England a learned body of men who had started what they called the Royal Society. They spent many hours studying the movements of the sun, moon and the stars and calculating when the next eclipse would be. They were also very anxious to discover if there were any islands and continents yet undiscovered in the Pacific and if it might be possible to find a north-west passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Some of the fellows of the Royal Society wrote books and papers about these things. Others went to sea themselves to observe the planets through telescopes and to make records of the strange beasts and birds they found in other lands. The whole of



England began to be very interested in their discoveries and the English Navy were asked to help. It was said that in the year 1768 the planet Venus would cross between the sun and the earth. This is a very rare event and, as it could not be seen from England, the Admiralty decided to send James Cook into the South Pacific Ocean to make a record of it and to voyage over those uncharted seas and make what discoveries he could. This was the chance which Cook had been longing for. He learnt as much as he could of astronomy and mathematics, read books and papers on those subjects and talked long with the learned men of the Royal Society. In May all his preparations were complete and he sailed away from England in a little ship called the "Endeavour". He had taken with him a large supply of green vegetables and lime-juice for he did not want his men to fall ill on the voyage from eating salt meat. Some of the Fellows of the Royal Society accompanied him on his perilous voyage in the little sailing ship in the hope of seeing and recording wonderful things. They were well rewarded for they were able to watch

the planet travelling across the face of the sun. They gazed at the sun through their powerful telescopes and saw a tiny dark spot with a clear sharp outline which they knew to be Venus pass slowly across the sun like a little disc.

When you see Venus in the evening sky she looks like a tiny globe of light suspended in the heavens. That light is borrowed from the sun. As Cook and his companions saw her from their ship she was between the earth and the sun and so could only be seen as a dark spot. When at length she moved away from the sun's face she could not be seen at all but was lost in the burning blue of the southern sky. Once the eclipse was over they weighed anchor and sailed on and on into the unknown seas looking for the great continent which they expected to find in the far south. At last they saw the faint blue line of land before them but it was no vast continent, only a beautiful group of islands with lovely green lawns and palm trees. At last they came to New Zealand and for seven months cruised about its coasts. They took soundings of the depths of the water and made charts of its

bays and headlands. When they sent boats ashore to explore the islands a horde of the people who lived there came down to attack them. It was not worth while risking their lives on a voyage of such importance so Cook turned his ship north-west again and found the land we now call Australia. The Dutch had already visited this country and had named it New Holland but very little was known of its real size and shape.

James Cook made a careful map of the east coast and, because one part of the view of distant headlands and mountains reminded him greatly of the line of the coasts of Wales as it fades before the eyes of the sailors who set out from Bristol, he named it New South Wales.

One day the party of explorers landed in a great bay where they found so many lovely and unknown plants and flowers that they called it Botany Bay. The magnificent natural harbour on which Sydney now stands Cook named Port Jackson after Sir George Jackson who was secretary to the Admiralty. He formally hoisted the British flag on the place where he landed, and to this day there stands

a monument erected to his memory on the exact spot where the flag once stood. At length the "Endeavour" turned her head homewards once more and sailing by the Torres Straits and the Indian Ocean arrived safely in England.

Cook was given a great reception when he arrived home. The Admiralty made him a Commander in the Royal Navy and two years later sent him out on another voyage of discovery. This time he went to the Pacific and South Atlantic and cruised about till he was quite sure there was no great continent there. Again he took stores of fresh vegetables and lime-juice and of the hundred and eighteen men on his ship only one died. He had found the way to keep men well at sea and sailors will be eternally grateful to him for that discovery. In 1779 came the last of his great voyages—in search of that fabled north-west passage which had led so many brave sailors and explorers to their death since the days of Queen Elizabeth. Cook sailed southward round the Cape of Good Hope, through the damp heat of the Indian Ocean to the Pacific. They cruised among its palm-fringed islands and

then turned away northward. The sea grew cold, warm airs and sun-baked beaches were left far behind as they drew near to the strange bare shores of Alaska and entered the Behring Straits. On and on they sailed through an unknown world of whiteness and snow, until a great wall of blue ice twelve feet high rose before them, completely barring their way. A great explorer had again failed to find the north-west passage which Frobisher and many other famous sailors had sought for in vain. Cook turned back despondently to his beloved Pacific. He cruised about its beautiful islands, intending to send a party ashore to explore the forests and mountains on them. One night as they lay at anchor off the island of Hawaii, with one of the ship's boats drawn up on the shore, some Hawaiians came in the darkness and carried it away. Cook knew that the Hawaiians would get very bold if this sort of thing was allowed to continue, so he landed a party of men next morning and told them to bring the Hawaiian chief on to his ship, where he intended to hold him prisoner until the boat was returned. The party marched.

into the village and carried off the chief while the Hawaiians looked on sullenly and muttered amongst themselves. Next day Cook landed himself with a few sailors to make some more enquiries about the missing boat which had not yet been returned. The Hawaiians flocked down to the shore in great numbers and surrounded the few Englishmen. Where was their chief they demanded? What right had these white-faced strangers to land on their shores? Someone threw a spear at one of the sailors, who knocked him down. In a minute a fight had started and, hopelessly outnumbered, the English had to return to their boats. The sailors sprang in and were ready to push off to the ships with their wounded safely in the boats. Cook as commander was the last to enter his boat and just as he was ready to spring aboard, a Hawaiian waded out into the water behind him and struck him a great blow on the back of his head. He fell face downwards into the water and before his men could fight their way to his body the Hawaiians had surrounded him in enormous numbers.

And so James Cook, who had been a

humble farmer's son and had risen entirely by his own ability to a great place among the explorers and navigators of the world, died on the shores of one of the strange countries which he had himself discovered.

### Questions.

1. What did Captain Cook most desire to do when he was the mate of a trading ship ?
  2. What was Captain Cook's first important task after joining the Royal Navy ? Was he successful ?
  3. What was the Royal Society ?
  4. What country did Cook discover beyond New Zealand ?
  5. Did Cook find the North-West Passage ?
  6. Tell the story of Cook's death in Hawaii.
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## FLYING TO THE FROZEN NORTH.

THE latest way of exploring new lands is by air. Aeroplanes have made the most tedious journeys speedy and possible to the modern explorer, although they are still very far from being a safe mode of travel. We in India have all read of the Houston Expedition



Amundsen.

which flew over Mount Everest in 1932 and made a wonderful record of the snow mountains by means of photographs. Many parts of the world have now been explored by air and from the photographs which the explorers have taken, the ruins of old cities and of former civilizations have been discovered where nobody ever expected them to be. One of these expeditions was in search of the hidden temples of Yucatan which are so covered with swamp and forest that it is impossible for anyone to reach them by land. Another expedition was made by Commander Byrd to the South Pole which he reached successfully but only after immense difficulty



and hair's-breadth escapes from death. The expedition which we are going to follow is that of the Norwegian explorer Amundsen to the North Pole. It had long been Amundsen's dream to fly out into the frozen Polar region and to bring back knowledge of those strange wastes that had defeated so many brave explorers for centuries. Amundsen was already famous for discovering the South Pole which he reached just a month before Captain Scott's ill-fated expedition, and for other expeditions in the Arctic and Antarctic regions. By great labour and persistence he managed to collect enough money to equip this enterprise and to gather the right men to help him. In 1925 two heavily laden ships, the "Hobby" and the "Fram," moved out of a Norwegian harbour and set out through the wet darkness of an April morning on the first stages of their long journey northwards. On the decks of the "Hobby," packed in great cases, were two sea-planes and on the "Fram" were the stores and men who were starting out on this great enterprise. Amundsen's intention was to sail up to Spitzbergen and from there fly out towards the North Pole and to explore

and map that almost unknown region of vast icefields and snow.

The two vessels ran into a blinding snow-storm at Skaaro Sound and became separated and it was not for several days that they found each other again in King's Bay. The Bay was full of ice and the ships had to force the ice to reach the quay. The stores were taken out and the huge packing cases containing the planes were taken ashore. Then, in spite of heavy falls of snow and bitterly cold winds, both machines were got ready within a few days and nothing remained for the explorers to do but to wait for better weather. At length, on the 20th of May, the sun rose in a clear sky and Amundsen decided to start. Everything was made ready and the six members of the expedition, dressed in thick clothes to withstand the cold, took their places in the seaplanes. It was hoped that the expedition would return in fourteen days but if it did not then the ships were to patrol the edge of the ice for six weeks.

The expedition started off at five o'clock in the morning and was nearly dashed to pieces at the outset of its journey, for as

they took off the ice began to break under them and the leading plane seemed to be dashing straight into a glacier ahead of them. The pilot of the leading plane, a famous Norwegian pilot named Riiser-Larsen, did not lose his head but sat calmly at the controls of his seaplane. Then he acted swiftly and the plane tilted upwards and was in the air and climbing splendidly. If Riiser-Larsen had miscalculated the timing at that moment Amundsen's expedition would have ended in death and disaster.

They rose to height of nearly 12,000 feet and below them they saw an interminable expanse of greyness with the occasional gleam of water. Before very long they plunged into an intensely cold fog which choked and blinded them. The leading plane mounted above the fog and for nearly two hours they flew above a thick blanket of mist. When at last the fog had been passed they saw below them, as far as the eye could travel, a vast expanse of packed ice. Amundsen knew this kind of country well. He had travelled by sledge, or wearily dragged himself on foot over similar wastes, but he had never seen it from the air

before and the sight appalled him and his companions. There seemed nothing but an endless waste of broken ice stretching away to the horizon. As they gazed down at the desolate scene it seemed almost impossible to believe that in other parts of this same world there was sunshine and mountains and green trees. Had their engines failed them at that moment their chances of life would have been of the slenderest, and they would have died in that unbroken waste of jumbled ice. Hour after hour they flew onwards towards the top of the world. The fliers had lost direction and gone far westward of their course, and it was impossible to get their bearings correctly for they could not even see where the ice ended and the line of the horizon began because the ice and sky were all of one colour—a dull grey. Their petrol was nearly used up and it was necessary to make a landing. At last they saw the gleam of water and a fairly large pool came into view. But even then they hesitated to descend, for in that cold region water has a habit of suddenly freezing over and there would be a danger of their machines being indefinitely fixed in the

ice. Riiser-Larsen brought his machine down low over the pool to look at it more closely, and all at once an engine began to splutter and then gave out. It was now absolutely necessary to make a forced landing, but they were now over the broken ice again and if they alighted on it the plane would be completely smashed. Then just ahead of them they saw a small pool which would be just wide enough for the plane if a perfect approach were made. Larsen, with a wonderful piece of piloting, brought the plane down squarely upon the narrow pool but the machine was still moving and dashing towards a big iceberg. The explorers prepared themselves for instant death, but the slush and ice through which they were travelling slowed up the machine and it came to a sudden standstill within a foot of the iceberg. The explorers descended from their plane and looked at each other in consternation. The plane was immovable in the ice and the great berg towered over it, barring its way out. Their companion plane was nowhere to be seen and they had only a very small supply of provisions. The place where they were

imprisoned was wrapped in a deathly stillness, broken only by the sound of cracking ice, and snow had begun to fall. Amundsen however refused to give in. He decided to dig the plane out of the ice and slush and to get it on to the firm ice of the berg from which he hoped it might be possible to start up the plane again. The three men set to work with an axe and some slip knives to make a slide and to level the iceberg. They toiled till evening, but the ice upon which they were working was so hard that after hours of labour only a few feet of the slide, up which they hoped to move the plane, were prepared. They worked on grimly, cutting their hands and bruising their fingers, in an attempt to finish their task before night came on. All this time it was getting colder and colder. During the afternoon Amundsen climbed on the wing of the plane, and with his binoculars, tried to see if the other plane were anywhere in sight. He had not been looking for long when he gave a great shout. Across the main pool of water, some miles away, he could see the plane on the ice and tiny figures moving round a tent close by. He attracted their

attention and soon the two parties were signalling to each other by Morse across the great stretch of ice. Amundsen learnt that the other plane had begun to leak badly and that they had to make a forced landing to repair the damage. Amundsen's party set to work with renewed spirits in their joy at having discovered their friends.

Looking through his binoculars again later in the evening Amundsen saw that the three men from the other plane were coming across the ice to help them. They had skis on and bulky haversacks strapped to their shoulders. Amundsen watched them anxiously as they made their way over the ridges and humps of ice, but at length they stopped and turned back as they found themselves on a sheet of new ice which was cracking badly. Amundsen warned them by semaphore not to come any nearer but to wait till morning so they returned to their tent.

Amundsen and his two companions went back to work. They were afraid that the ice, in the pool in which the plane lay might thicken and crush the little seaplane; or that the great solid floor of ice around them might

start cracking up and moving, when they would all be crushed to death. Early next morning their work began to bear fruit and the slide had been completed. With the assistance of the other party they thought they would be able to move the plane on to the firmer ice. At ten o'clock the two parties signalled to each other, and Larsen and Amundsen took their canvas boat out of the plane to meet the other men and to ferry them over the pool. The three men came safely across the ice and then disappeared behind an iceberg. Amundsen suddenly heard a terrible cry and thought that they had perished. He and Larsen went round the iceberg and to their great relief found their three friends safe though soaked to the skin.

The leader had fallen through some thin ice and the next man, coming to his assistance had himself fallen into a crack. The third man, regardless of his own danger, had pulled him out and they had both gone to help the leader. All three might easily have lost their lives had not each shown such devotion and self-sacrifice. As soon as the party reached the plane they began to work. At night they



all rested in the plane and managed to keep warm. The next day the slide was ready and the six men pushed and heaved the plane on to the firm ice. That evening as they gazed over the broken ice towards the other plane they were astonished to find that it had moved quite close to them. The current of water which is continually moving under the ice had carried it on its huge frozen platform to within less than a mile of them. The whole party set off across the ice to examine the plane and found that it was firmly wedged in the ice and badly damaged. After a consultation they decided that they would have to abandon it. They therefore transferred all the food and petrol to the other plane. But after all their labour they found that the plane was now too high on the floe and that they would have to make another slide to get it on to the stretch of ice below it. They worked for a whole day, moving tons of ice and snow until it was at last finished. Larsen got into the pilot's seat and the other men hung on to the machine to steady it. As they moved forward, the ice broke under them and a thick fog suddenly

came down, blotting out everything. They were now unable to do anything so they got into the machine and went to sleep, worn out with their terrible labours of the past days. They had not slept long when Larsen woke them up by shouting that the ice was closing in. Everyone jumped out of the machine and found that it was frozen in a great sheet of ice. All round them was the horrible sound of breaking and grinding ice. The whole icefield was moving and the force and pressure would, at any minute, crush in the sides of the plane. The men flung themselves at the ice which surrounded the plane, and with axes and knives began to break it so that it should not crush the machine. The fog had lifted and they now decided to move the plane to a more open sheet of ice near the abandoned machine. The thin ice over which they had to go would not hold the plane but it was able to crash its way through it to another sheet of water where they hoped it would be safe for the night. But in a very short time the fog came on again and the ice began to close in about the plane. Rain was falling and all through the night they had to battle

with the encroaching ice. Next morning Larsen and Amundsen went off among the icebergs to see if they could find a better take-off place and about a quarter of mile away they found a fairly flat broad sheet of ice which seemed firm. The machine was driven to it across the ice and then they found that they would have to build another slide to get it on to the firm sheet of ice. By now they had almost lost track of the hours and days, their provisions were running short, and after six hours of great labour they could only allow themselves a couple of biscuits and a cup of cocoa each. Still they worked grimly on, surmounting each great obstacle which came in their way, and, somehow or other, finding the strength to face the next. After slaving till night they found that the moving stretch of ice was coming down on them again and that all their work had been wasted. It seemed as if there was some malignant spirit of the wilderness of ice which was working against them. Once more they set to work. The two planes now lay side by side on the ice. It was one month and seventeen days since they had left home and

their ship's crew would already be getting very anxious. The little party rested from their labours and wondered what to do next. Two large icebergs stood in their way and beyond them a hollow in the ice. The bergs must be levelled, and the hollow filled in before they could make another attempt to start, and so for another day and a night they set to work again and levelled the bergs. Then they found that the snow was so thick under the plane that it could not turn. This meant more shovelling for twenty-four hours to make a track through three feet deep snow. When they had cleared a great track 600 yards long and 16 yards broad, a thaw set in and all their work was wasted.

It seemed as if they would never get the plane into the air again. Amundsen began to wonder if they ought not to abandon it also and to set off on foot across the great waste of ice, but he knew that they were all dead tired, that their food was running short and that they had no proper equipment for a long journey by land. He therefore decided to risk everything on the plane. They prayed for a frost to come and harden the ice, and at length

on the 14th June the temperature began to fall. They threw out all their heavy clothes, the canvas boat and skin shoes to lighten the plane and got ready to make the great attempt next morning. To their great delight a slight wind sprang up to help them. The track they had made was frozen over but it was so dark that they had to put a line of dark objects along it to guide the pilot. Amundsen walked over the track before they started and saw it was already beginning to crack. If they did not hurry it would be too late. Larsen climbed into the pilot's seat and the others took their places. One man was in the mess cabin with a camera and note-book for geographical observation, for through all their terrible experiences the party had never forgotten the object of their flight, and had made hundreds of valuable observations and notes.

The machine began to move forward. There was a scraping sound as if the snow was going to catch the machine again but all at once it broke free and began to race down the track to the end of the icefloe.

Then just before them they saw a widening

crack of ice. They all saw it and held their breath. It seemed as if the machine would be smashed to pieces but Larsen had already lifted the machine; the grinding sound ceased and the plane was at last free of the grip of the Arctic ice.

The little party of explorers gave a great sigh of relief. At last they were in the air again and yet the future was all uncertain still. Hundreds of miles of tumbled ice lay between them and home. There was no landing place if the engine should fail and they had hardly any food. But these men had laughed at Death too often to care. They slowed down the machine to observe the conditions below them and to take photographs of the grey waste below, where no sign of life broke the stillness of the ice. They steered by their magnetic compass for Spitzbergen. Fog after fog came down upon them and they found themselves flying over huge icebergs. All at once the sun broke through the bank of fog and they saw that they were on the right course. By now their petrol was getting low and unless they saw land soon there would be no chance for them. Then suddenly a group

of islands appeared below them and the long line of a hill. Beyond was the open sea. Larsen found that his controls were jamming, and just had time to direct the plane over the sea before it began to dive in a forced landing on the tumbling waves. They taxied over the water towards the land and arrived in a bay and landed safely. The joy of the little band of explorers at being on dry land again was too great to express. Towards evening a ship was seen moving across the bay and Amundsen signalled to her. The crew of the ship were greatly astonished to see the explorers and their plane. Amundsen arranged for the plane to be towed to Spitzbergen and for his party and himself to be passengers on the ship. Through a stormy day and night they steamed towards Spitzbergen and as they entered King's Bay, Larsen excitedly pointed out the "Hobby" lying at anchor. Beside her was another naval vessel and two planes which were evidently preparing to set off on a search for the lost explorers. As the little ship in which the explorers were drew alongside the "Hobby" there was a great cry of joy from the crew of the "Hobby" as they

recognised Amundsen's well-known face and saw his five companions safe and sound beside him.

And so the little band of explorers returned safely to their homes in Norway after their terrible adventures with Death.

### Questions.

1. What was Amundsen already famous for having done ?
  2. Why did the fliers try to build a slide when their plane was fixed in the ice ?
  3. Describe the feelings of the little party when after weeks of useless endeavour their plane at last rose in the air free from the ice ?
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## NOTES.

**“ The Discovery of the East.”**

**Galleys**—Low flat one-decked vessels.

**Pope**—The head of the Roman Catholic Church who lives at Rome.

**Friars**—Members of a religious order or sect.

**“ With Gordon in the Sudan.”**

**Slavers**—Persons engaged in the slave-trade.

**Khedive**—Ruler and Viceroy of Egypt.

**David Livingstone.**

**Stanley**—Afterwards the famous explorer Sir Henry Morton Stanley.

**Sir Francis Younghusband.**

**Dessert**—Course of fruit or sweetmeats generally served at the end of a meal.

**Alpine Club Men**—Famous Mountaineers belonging to the Alpine Club or Society.

**“ Captain Scott’s Last Expedition.”**

**Floes**—Sheets of floating ice.

**Sledges**—A carriage on runners instead of wheels.

**Blizzard**—A blinding snow-storm.

**Blubber**—Fat.

**“ We really are an excellently found party.”**—We really are a well-chosen party of men.”

**“ Vasco da Gama.”**

**Hottentots**—A race who occupied the region near the Cape.

**Pennons**—Long narrow triangular flags or streamers.

**“ Sir Francis Drake.”**

**Cables**—Anchor ropes or chains.

**Portuguese East Indiaman**—A Portuguese ship engaged in Indian trade.

**Pinnace**—A smaller boat on attendance on a large one. An eight-oared boat carried by a Man-of-War-ship.

**“ Captain Cook.”**

**Charts**—Navigator's sea-maps, showing rocks, depths, etc.

**“ Flying to the Frozen North.”**

**Seaplane**—A hydro-aeroplane fitted with floats for landing on the water.

**“ Impossible to get their bearings correctly ”**—Impossible to get their exact position.

**Skis**—Norwegian snow shoes of wood about 8 feet long by 4 inches wide.

**Iceberg**—Solid mass of ice which has broken off a glacier and may be found floating in the sea many miles from land.

**Icefield**—Expanse of ice.

**Icepack**—Drift ice collected and jammed into a mass.



